

By the Grace of the Gods: Volume 1

Roy

VISIT...

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By the Grace of the Gods

1

Roy

Illust. Ririnra



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1

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Illust. Rinra





"It's time."

"Looks like
everything's
ready."

"Take care
and have
fun, okay?"

Particles of
light enveloped
Ryoma's body.
The light
gradually grew
brighter, until
Ryoma's vision
was entirely
obscured.

"Yeah,
I got it...
Thank you
very, very
much!"

By
the Grace of the Gods 1



Takebayashi Ryoma

Reborn from another world. Formerly a middle-aged Japanese salaryman. Began his second life in this world after receiving the gods' blessings. Hobbies are self-improvement and researching his tamed slimes.

Eliaria Jamil

The daughter of Duke Reinhart. Has a bright and honest personality and is close in age to Ryoma, who she treats favorably. Born with an extremely high amount of magic energy.



Reinbach Jamil

Previous head of the Jamil family dukedom. Invites Ryoma on a journey away from the forest he was living secretly in.

Elise Jamil

Wife of Duke Reinhart. Treats Ryoma warmly for having a difficult upbringing.

Reinhart Jamil

Current head of the Jamil family dukedom. Met Ryoma after being saved by him in the forest.



Both the
young miss
and her maid
are amazed at
its wonderful
abilities!

The new
species of
slime Ryoma
discovered...

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Prologue 1

A single man stood alone in an empty space. His bone-tired face and streaks of white visible in his hair made his age seem to be in his late forties or fifties.

But contrary to his appearance from the neck up...

Underneath what was probably his sleepwear of a plain T-shirt and loose shorts, his vigorous body was bursting with well-built muscles indicative of how much training it had gone through.

“Hmm...? Where... am I?”

The man blinked around and muttered, wondering if he had gotten blackout drunk in a store somewhere — when three people appeared before him, seemingly out of nowhere.

“Awake now?”

“Can you think clearly yet?”

“We’d be grateful if you could respond.”

“Yes, I’m fine. The suddenness of everything surprised me, so I was slow to respond. My name is Takebayashi Ryoma.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. There’s no need for any formalities. Come, have some tea.”

An old man with a long beard smiled gently at Ryoma’s conditioned reflex to introduce himself and waved his hand across the ground.

A coffee table appeared out of thin air, along with enough cushions and teacups for everyone present.

“Now, why don’t you sit down first?”

“Okay, thank you.”

Out of the three people who appeared, just one of them was a woman.

The young woman smiled cheerfully at Ryoma as she urged him into a seat, which Ryoma accepted with a word of thanks.

The others sat down in a similar fashion: the elderly man to Ryoma’s front, the woman to his right, and the remaining boy to his left.

With the four of them seated along all sides of the coffee table, they began to drink their tea. After one sip, Ryoma opened his mouth.

“Pardon me, but I have a few things I’d like to ask about, if you don’t mind answering?”

“Of course. That’s what we’re here for, after all. However, I have a

pretty good idea of what your questions may be. Would you listen to us speak first? Some of your questions should be answered that way.”

“I understand, please go ahead.”

Seeing Ryoma bow his head, the elderly man nodded once before launching into a frank explanation of the situation.

“We are what humans refer to as ‘gods.’ I am Gain the Creator, and the woman to your right is the Goddess of Love, Lulutia. The boy to your left is the God of Life, Kufo. We live in a world different from your Earth. And I must regretfully inform you that last night, you took your last breath while you were sleeping. We brought your soul here after your death. Here, as in heaven.”

“I see, so that’s what happened.”

Ryoma nodded in acceptance, bringing his tea to his mouth for another sip.

The three gods were baffled by the reaction.

Especially bewildered was the god with the appearance of a young boy, Kufo.

“Wait, that’s all?! Shouldn’t you be more like, ‘No way!’ or like, ‘Why did I die?!’ or something like that?”

“Those who have come here before you were a little more shaken up...”

“I am surprised, and I do think it sounds a little unrealistic. But if this was a dream, then I’d wake up eventually, if this was real, then humans indeed die eventually. After all, the work at my company was rather relentless... I’ve seen many coworkers and new recruits quit, owing to the damage to their health, so I figured I would die early too. If anything, it’s a miracle my body has held out to the age of 39 going on 40. Plus, reading stories like this is a hobby of mine... I love it. I don’t have any family or relatives, so this is a much better option than just turning into ash.”

Ryoma spoke with earnest contentment, but the confusion on the gods’ faces did not fade.

“R-Really? Should humans think that way? Are you sure you haven’t reached some kind of enlightenment?”

“I don’t think hobbies have anything to do with this. There have been several people with the same hobbies as you, but they were rather ecstatic. They wouldn’t listen at all, so it was quite a handful... though I suppose I should be grateful they weren’t pessimistic about it all.”

“Well, I suppose we’ve been saved the trouble of convincing you, then... That leaves far fewer topics to go through. Was there anything you wanted to ask?”

Ryoma thought for a moment before slowly opening his mouth.

“In that case... How did I die?”

“Hmm? You want to start there?”

“Yes. I don’t consider it a surprise that I died, I just don’t have any memory of dying.”

"Well, I suppose you wouldn't remember a death like that."

“Your death was caused by a brain hemorrhage from head trauma.”

“Huh...?! As far as I remember, I was just trying to sleep in my room.”

“Yes, you did fall asleep. But during your sleep, you sneezed numerous times.”

“Four times, to be exact. Each time you sneezed, your pillow shifted; until the last sneeze caused your head to hit the floor. Your futon was a cheap and flimsy thing, so it didn’t act as much of a cushion...”

“The impact wasn’t enough to wake you up, but it was enough to cause a vessel in your brain to burst. The bleeding continued through to dawn, when your brain succumbed to the extra pressure.”

After hearing that, Ryoma looked down and processed the thoughts in his head. Then his expression suddenly soured as he squeezed out his words.

“That’s bullshit... How could I die such a pathetic death?”

“““???”””

“I’ve taken beer bottles from my drunk boss and metal pipes from delinquents to the head before and turned out fine. I can’t even count how many times I’ve taken punches to the head from my father during training. So why the hell did a stupid sneeze finally do me in...?!”

It was as though Ryoma had forgotten everyone around him as he started to reveal his intense emotions — but the gods watched on as though they had expected this.

"Ah, there it is."

“Unfazed by his own death and our existence, yet shaken by something like this. What an odd child.”

“It looks like he held some pride in the strength of his body. His father forcefully drilled martial arts lessons into him from a young age, and he continued to train himself as part of his daily routine until he died. Kufo, Lulutia...”

“Yes?”

“Is there a problem?”

"I don't know if it's a problem, but there's something about him I'm interested in. Could you assist me until he calms down?"

Gain's expression was much more serious than when he had been talking to Ryoma. The other two gods sensed what he was thinking and started talking in words that couldn't be heard by humans, all while keeping an eye on Ryoma, who was clutching his head in gloom.

and tuned out from his surroundings.

“Phew... Oh, oops. I’m sorry, I was lost in my own little world.”
Some time later.

Once Ryoma had regained some of his composure, he lifted his head to find the gods drinking their tea just like before.

“It’s fine, we’re usually pretty free and the other world is in a fairly good place right now, so there’s plenty of time. And it isn’t an odd sight to see people losing their composure here. Human souls are meant to be paired with a body, after all. Even if we use our divine powers to maintain that, the instability makes it easy for emotions to run wild. It’s no surprise for us, so you don’t need to worry about it either.”

“The perception of time is a little vague in the divine realm, and souls can’t feel hunger or thirst. It wouldn’t be unusual for four years to pass before someone calmed down enough to talk.”

“Four years?!”

Ryoma didn’t hide his surprise at the words of Kufo, the god that looked like a young boy. But that was a regular occurrence for the gods.

“It depends on whether the person snaps out of it themselves or if we need to intervene to calm them. But we typically leave them alone for a while, because they don’t listen when they zone out of reality like that. And it’s more troublesome to have them be wary of us, so we can’t act rashly. There are some people that break down at every point of our conversation. Four years can pass easily while waiting for them to calm down. That’s why you don’t need to worry about it, Ryoma. If anything, we should resume our conversation now that you’ve calmed. Is that all right?”

“Yes, I understand.”

Gain nodded once at Ryoma’s response.

“Good. Now, as for why we called you here... Perhaps you’d understand if I described it like this? It’s the trope.”

“I see, so I’m going to another world. Is it a transfer? Or am I being reincarnated, since I’m dead already?”

“You really are quick on the uptake...”

Ryoma listened to Lulutia’s explanation, paying no mind to the slight astonishment in her expression and tone.

“It’ll technically be a transfer. You’ll be using a body we created in our world, so you won’t have parents or relatives.”

“Your body on the other side will be fairly young, so you can consider it a reincarnation. If you have any requests about your appearance, we can alter it to a degree too.”

“Exactly how old will this body be?”

“Roughly ten years of age. At that age, it should be believable

enough that you wandered into a forest and survived out of luck. You won't be suspected as much as a child, so you can head to the town and begin your life there. Of course, we'll protect you as much as we can. Your social status will be that of an orphaned commoner, but we've selected a kingdom with a more open-minded society to send you to. It shouldn't hinder your daily life."

"Thank you very much. Please make sure my appearance on the other side is somewhat normal. Incidentally, what should I be doing once I reach the other world? Do I have some kind of mission?"

"Hmm... You technically do, but it ends the moment you go to the world. That's why practically, you don't. If I had to say, then your mission is the act of going to our world itself."

"Our goal is to send the magical energy of Earth to our magically depleted world by sending you to our world."

While Ryoma accepted this explanation, he had a new question to ask.

"You can't send magical energy alone?"

"Indeed. To put it simply, there's a wall between our two worlds. Magical energy normally cannot cross that wall. But if we open a hole with our power, we can transfer magic through it. However, this is an extremely difficult task, even for us gods. Maintaining the hole requires power, which we run out of before transferring the necessary amount of energy. That's where you come in! You won't be conscious for this part, but we use our divine power to push your soul into the wall and use you as a prop to keep the hole open for a short amount of time. During that time, we transfer the magical energy from Earth."

"Our world has developed the use of magic, so running out of magical energy would cause many problems. Not only would the people relying on magic to live suffer, but monsters that feed on magical energy would go extinct, removing them from the food chain and destroying the balance of nature. On the other hand, Earth has magical energy that it doesn't use, and there are no monsters either. It won't cause a problem if it runs out, so we've been taking it for ourselves."

"I see... If there isn't a particular reason for the depletion of energy, is it just being caused by the consumption outpacing the production?"

"That's correct. There are many reasons for it, but humans are the main cause. I understand that magic is useful and has developed out of exhaustive research, but its consumption keeps going up..."

"It's a little difficult to keep the consumption of magical energy under control. Furthermore, using too much of the magic inside your body can make you unwell. It's much easier to gather the surrounding energy to use magic instead, but seeing the reliance on such an

irresponsible method is saddening.”

While the gods complained about the use of magic and humans, Ryoma was off feeling excited on his own.

“Umm... Would I be able to use it too? Magic, that is.”

“You can.”

“Yes.”

“Sure you will.”

“Really?! Oh, pardon my rudeness.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. Magic, was it? You’ll be transferring into a body just like the humans over there. Naturally, since the humans can use magic, you will be able to as well with some training.”

“Also, like we mentioned earlier, you’ll be under the protection of our divine power while crossing worlds, so we can bestow a bit of power on you too. Even if you have no talent, we can raise your base stats to a level where you can enjoy using magic too. It gets a little more difficult if you want the strongest power in the world, though.”

While Ryoma was a little embarrassed at how they were looking at him like an adorable child, he was still happy at the prospects of being able to use magic.

“In that case, the power we’ll bestow upon you will be magic-related. First, we’ll make sure you can use all of the elemental magics.”

“Umm... Wouldn’t that attract attention?”

The three gods grinned at Ryoma’s question.

“Everyone who comes here always says that! Especially the ones who read light novels.”

“It’s considered rare in our world, but it’s not something people will fuss over.”

“Really?”

“Yup. Some people are born with it, and others can learn to use all the elemental magics with the right training. There are probably ten to twenty people among the kingdom’s knights that can do so. However, because there are so many elements to use, training them all evenly would result in less time to practice, making each one hard to master. Between magicians that can use every element to a limited degree and magicians that have mastered a single element, the latter one is more valued.”

“Jack of all trades, master of none, huh.”

“Indeed.”

“That’s why nothing bad will come out of it, so it’d be perfect for someone who wants to enjoy using magic like you, Ryoma.”

“...I see. Then please give me all the elements.”

“Got it. There’s still some power left, so what would you like for the rest?”

After that, Ryoma and the gods continued to talk about powers until they were satisfied.

“...All right, that should be all that we can fit. Everything ended up magic-related, though. Are you sure? Carrying over the martial arts you learned in your previous life won’t be a problem, but this many types of magic means you won’t be able to use strong magic right away, you know?”

“As long as it won’t hinder my ability to live, please do everything as we discussed.”

“Okay. If you haven’t changed your mind, then that’s for the best. Now we come to the last step.”

Gain accepted Ryoma’s firm determination and pulled out a wooden board, parchment, and quill out of seemingly nowhere.

The parchment listed all the details of their discussion until now, along with an empty space for a name to be signed at the bottom right.

“To think I’d be signing contracts even after death...”

“Oh, is this not to your liking?”

“I wouldn’t say that. It was just a little unexpected.”

“Well, the contract isn’t actually necessary.”

“Huh?”

Lulutia and Kufo’s response to his meaningless remark made Ryoma pause in reaching for the quill.

“This is just a final check. It’s for you to confirm that we’ve fulfilled our duty in explaining our circumstances and the situation you will be placed in. By signing it, you’ll be confirming your willing participation. That’s why you can confirm verbally as well.”

“Really?”

“We change it up based on the person we’re dealing with. A verbal agreement is easier than a contract for the younger kids.”

Hearing that response, Ryoma focused on the contents of the contract and signed it once he finished reading it.

The next moment, his body was engulfed in a faint light.

“Huh?!”

“Don’t worry. This is just proof the process has started; it won’t harm you.”

“Unfortunately, that’s the rule. After all the explanations and decisions are made, there isn’t much time until you’re sent to the other side.”

“I wonder why it’s always the nasty ones that always stay the longest, while the likeable ones depart on their journey so soon...”

Those words made Ryoma realize the time had come to say their goodbyes.

“I see. That is rather regretful. I am forever in your debt.”

“Don’t worry about it. It’s your life, live it how you please. We’ll send you to the safest forest possible, so rest assured.”

“We’ll always be watching over you. This is a goodbye, so you can say what you want, too, you know?”

“You don’t have to be so polite in your speech either.”

“Why don’t you show your true self, since this will be the last time we’ll meet?”

“Yes... Yeah, you’re right. Thanks. I guess you could tell I was putting on airs, huh?”

“We’re gods, after all. Of course we’d notice. Not to mention how different your tone was when you had your breakdown.”

“You should have just spoken to us like that from the start!”

“I don’t think I could suddenly speak casually to a god...”

“It gets uncomfortable when it goes too far, but you’re fine, Ryoma. I have a magnanimous heart. Since I *am* a goddess, after all.”

“I see.”

“Do you have any plans for when you get to the other side?”

“If there’s anything you’re worried about, let them out now.”

“We’ll hear you out!”

Ryoma tried to ponder in thought, but his words came out without much of a pause.

“...It’s about my personal relations. I lived for 39 years, but I wasn’t very good at socializing with people. Even if I go to another world, I’m still me. I don’t think going to another world will change that. Honestly, I’m so tired of socializing, I considered living as a recluse...”

“If that’s what you want to do, go for it. That’s also a way of life.”

“At the same time, it feels like a waste not to explore a whole new world. What to do...”

“Why don’t you live in isolation for a while, then set off on a journey once you feel like it?”

Ryoma wondered if that was really okay.

“Either way, you’ll be arriving at a forest first, since it’d cause a huge fuss if we suddenly transferred you to the middle of town. You can live in that forest for a while, then head to the town later. You wanted to experiment with magic anyway, didn’t you?”

“Ah... That’s true.”

“Take your time. You seem to be trying to do all of the options available to you, but you can just take them one at a time at your own pace. It doesn’t matter if you can’t do all of them.”

“You’ve died once already, you know? This will really be a rebirth for you, completely different to your previous life. You should live how you want to. Especially since you’ll be a child on the other side, you know? You don’t have to think about anything other than staying

safe and having fun. The powers we bestowed upon you will be your strength, so enjoy your magic practice, too. Ah, you won't be able to use everything as soon as you arrive, but you should pick up things quickly with your Earth knowledge, so there's no need to rush, okay? You should prioritize control."

"Indeed, that would be for the best. You should be able to handle any bandits as well; on the slim chance you encounter them."

"...So I should take it easy and do what I want, huh? In that case, I'll stay in the forest for a while. I feel a lot better now, thanks."

"If you do head into town, stop by the church from time to time. You won't be able to see us, but if you obtain the oracle skill, you'll be able to converse with us for short periods of time. The higher your level, the longer and more often we can talk for."

"Got it, if I head into town I'll make sure to drop by. I don't know when that will be, but I promise to visit the church for sure."

"Yup, we'll be waiting. You'll have to put up with our idle chatter again."

"We do have lots of time to spare, hohoho."

Just as Gain chuckled, particles of light wrapped around Ryoma's body.

"...Looks like it's time."

The light gradually grew stronger, obstructing Ryoma's vision.

"It seems the preparations are done."

"It's time."

"Stay healthy and have fun, okay?"

"Yeah, I will... Thank you so, so very much!"

"Yup! Now, here goes! Open the path to the new world!"

"We grant you our blessings!"

"Let there be light on your journey!"

""""Enjoy your new life!""""

Immediately after that, Ryoma was swallowed by a blinding light. Once that light faded, both Ryoma and the gods were gone.

Prologue 2

“Gotta work... Tabuchi, progress report...”

Deep in the forest, Ryoma woke up in the shadows of the overgrown trees.

He had the appearance of a young boy, just like the gods had said, no older than 10 and dressed in linen clothes, slumped against the trunk of a tree and fast asleep.

After muttering some words oddly out of sync with his appearance, he squinted through the sunlight filtering through the trees and looked around sleepily.

“A forest? It’s not... a dream, right...?”

As he sat there smelling the scent of the dirt, forest, and wind, he gradually recalled how he came to be there.

“That’s right. This is another world. Hmm?”

His eyes landed on the leather bag and diary-sized book by his waist.

When he picked it up to look at the cover, he was met with the word “letter” written in symbols that clearly weren’t Japanese.

The senders were the three gods that invited him to this world.

“Gain, Kufo, Lulutia...”

After reading aloud the naturally written names, he recalled his memory of the gods.

They were polite and considerate enough to provide me with all the knowledge to live before sending me, but they’ve even supplemented that with a letter... Though at this thickness, it’s more of a manual than a letter...

He turned the page to see three things written there.

First, that he was in a world called Seilfall, in the Rifall Kingdom’s Forest of Gana. There were no particularly strong beasts or monsters here, so it was a comparatively safe place to live.

The second was that it wasn’t completely safe, so he was to confirm the movements of his new body and relocate somewhere safe to live.

A small map had been carefully included.

The last point to conclude the first page was to “read the rest of the letter once you’ve moved somewhere safe.”

A faint smile appeared on Ryoma’s face at how thoroughly the gods left their instructions, but when he tried to get up, he felt a

strong displacement within his body.

“I really am a child now... Me, Takebayashi Ryoma. Systems engineer. 39 years old and single. It’s as though my memories were transplanted... Reminds me of a certain child detective.”

Though he had listened to the explanation, Ryoma was surprised to actually feel the change in his body and confirmed there were no abnormalities.

Once he checked everything was fine, he took a breath and started to move his body.

He bent and stretched his arms and legs, going through each part of his body with simple warm-up exercises that gradually grew more intense.

Then, only after checking each and every martial art form his father had relentlessly beat into him in his previous life, did his movements stop.

“...”

The moment after his eyes locked onto a narrow tree beside him, he dug a sharp kick into its trunk.



“Peep!”

“Chirp chirp!”

A light tearing sound echoed through the quiet forest.

Despite the tree being alive and healthy, the trunk cleanly snapped in half and fell to the ground, stirring the birds resting their wings in the nearby greenery.

Seeing that result summarized the rest of his movements up until then for Ryoma.

Weird... My strength is that of my previous life or better. It doesn't suit my frame at all. My body's so light I move like a breeze, and the length of my limbs should go without saying. My distance, perception and senses are out of tune. I don't think I'll have problems with basic movements like walking or running, but... I guess I'll have to get used to it bit by bit.

Having reached that conclusion, Ryoma returned to the base of the tree he had been sleeping against and checked for his current position on the map. He picked up the bag and put the letter away, at the same time finding a knife to keep by his side as he started walking towards the destination the gods had marked.

Two hours later.

Ryoma had spotted several small animals and creatures that didn't exist on Earth, but they were all weak monsters that either fled of their own accord or ignored him completely.

While traveling took a little more time with his child legs, the journey itself wasn't dangerous and even allowed him to gather herbs and edible plants using the knowledge the gods had bestowed upon him in advance.

Thus, Ryoma eventually walked into the depths of the dimly lit forest.

The trees parted before a cliff face of bare rock.

Ryoma looked around to confirm his safety before quickly putting down his belongings and sitting down to read the continuation of the letter from the gods.

“Hmm, so there's a river nearby. Looks like the perfect place for a home base.”

Ryoma muttered to himself as he read more of the letter, showing no signs of heading towards civilization nor intent to actually leave the forest.

Like he had told the gods, he planned on starting from living as a recluse in the forest.

“Apparently there's a tent among the supplies, but a cave would be safer when up against monsters...”

The safety of a tent wasn't very reassuring.

With that thought, Ryoma approached the cliff face and poked the bare rock with his right hand before moving his eyes back to the letter in his left hand.

The page on top was an explanation of how to use magic.

“First, calm your heart and focus within your body... Like this? It feels like there’s a water balloon under my skin... Gross...”

Despite calling it gross, the tone of his voice was a mix of excitement and delight, and his expression also softened faintly.

However, no matter how much of an interest he had in games and light novels, even if he had thought of countless fantasies between the breaks of his busy work life, he still had never used magic before.

Because of that...

“Umm... Once you feel the magical energy within your body... Move while imagining that magical energy flowing out of your body, yup.”

He checked each and every step along the way.

He was almost the spitting image of an elderly person with an instruction manual in one hand while struggling to keep up with modern-day technology. But once he imagined the magical energy flowing out of his fingertips, it slowly but surely started to happen.

For the record, the twelve elements of magic were: Neutral, Fire, Water, Wind, Earth, Ice, Lightning, Wood, Poison, Light, Dark, and Space.

Each element was sorted into a difficulty level referred to as lower elements, middle elements, or higher elements.

Furthermore, the element of a magic type was changed based on what someone imagined as they released their magical energy, and could be activated by chanting the spell name of the magic.

Having read this sentence in the letter, Ryoma decided to select one of the earth magics recorded on the page and test it out.

“The magical energy flows into the rock of the cliff, breaking it into dirt... Break Rock.”

The cliff touching the end of his fingertip crumbled slightly, creating a small hole in the face.

The hole was roughly three fingers wide and as deep as his first knuckle.

It was more of a dent than a hole, but Ryoma just looked at it and laughed quietly.

How long has it been since I felt this way? A life where overnight shifts and overtime was normal, where I was either at work, home, or out drinking with my bosses. It's not like I didn't have any fun at all, but... It's been so long that I've forgotten this feeling...

While remaining alert of his surroundings, he continued to use Break Rock with a smiling face for some time.

But after he was satisfied with his first use of magic, Ryoma muttered to himself.

“This isn’t very efficient.”

All this effort and I only have a hole large enough for both my hands... I won’t even be done by sunset at this rate. And there should be a limit to how much magical energy I can use anyway.

With that thought, Ryoma decided to take a break and retrieve water from the nearby river. Once he returned, he started to read the next part of the letter.

It’d be nice if there was something useful... But at worst, I’ll just use the tent. Back on Earth it wasn’t rare for me to do two to three all-nighters in a row, so I should be able to last that long without sleeping... Oh!

Ryoma had turned the page in search of a solution to his problem and came across a table where all his current abilities and statistics were displayed.

My status, huh? This is useful. I can check what I’m currently capable of with this.

On the page, these words were written.

Name: Ryoma Takebayashi

Gender: Male

Age: 8

Race: Human

My name and gender are unchanged from my previous life. Aside from how my family name comes last now. And I’m eight years old... I wonder what kind of child I was back then? I can’t remember anything other than training under my father. Well, whatever. Next.

Physical Energy: 10,486

Magical Energy: 102,300

Note: The average adult male has a physical energy of around 1000, while adventurers, soldiers, and others that have undergone training have an average of 2000-3000.

“Wow, am I a musclehead?”

I knew I could move around more than my bosses and the youngsters these days, but was it always this big of a gap? I can understand my magical energy increasing because of the transfer process, but... I don’t recall asking for increased physical strength.

A similar note was written for magical energy, where the average person had 100. Warriors that used supplementary magic had 500-700. Normal magicians had anywhere from 1000-5000, while royal sorcerers had an average of 10,000-50,000.

Well, I suppose it doesn’t hurt to have more. The rest are my skills and abilities, huh?

Everyday Skills

Housekeeping 10, Etiquette 7, Performance 3, Singing 3, Calculation 5

Combat Skills

Unarmed Combat 7, Sword Mastery 7, Dagger Mastery 6, Hidden Weapon Mastery 7, Spear Mastery 4, Bow Mastery 4, Staff Mastery 6, Chain Weapon Mastery 4, Throwing Weapon Mastery 7, Stealth 6, Trapping 4, Body Control 5, Energy Meditation 5

Magic Skills

Taming Magic 1, Barrier Magic 1, Healing Magic 1, Alchemy 1, Fire Magic 1, Water Magic 1, Wind Magic 1, Earth Magic 1, Neutral Magic 1, Lightning Magic 1, Ice Magic 1, Poison Magic 1, Wood Magic 1, Light Magic 1, Dark Magic 1, Space Magic 1, Magic Detection 1, Magic Control 1, Magic Recovery Speed 1

Crafting Skills

Medicine 6, Blacksmithing 1, Architecture 2, Woodworking 2, Modeling 3, Painting 4

Resistance Skills

Physical Pain Resistance 8, Mental Pain Resistance 9, Health 7

Special Skills

Life Enhancement 3, Super Recovery 3, Stamina Enhancement 6, Mental Concentration 5, Survival Arts 3

Titles

Rise from Below
Ended an Unfortunate Life
Apprentice of the God of Military Arts
Apprentice of the Sage
Beloved Child of the Gods

Protections

Protection of Gain, the Creator
Protection of Kufo, God of Life
Protection of Lulutia, Goddess of Love

So the number following the skill is the proficiency level of that ability. Learning the basics is level 1-2, level 3 is established, level 4 is experienced, level 5 is top-notch, and level 6 and above is mastery... I guess my 39 years of experience came through. Most of these skills are from work, school, or the part-time jobs I did. Abilities like programming don't seem to exist in this world, so they're not written here... And titles and protections don't seem too useful to me right now... All right, let's see how I can dig a hole with these skills.

For the next ten minutes, Ryoma glared at the explanations of the skills written on the next page, reading them carefully.

Then, he spotted a certain skill.

Energy meditation — an ability that enhances the physical body using life force.

By focusing the mind on the energy within oneself and circulating it around the body like magical energy, the physical functions of the

body could be improved as a whole. It could also be used to enshroud a weapon in energy and increase its sharpness and might.

Because it was a skill acquired naturally through prolonged training of the body in combat abilities, it could sometimes be used unconsciously.

This must be why my body's been moving so fluidly. It seems like it'd be useful once I understand it fully. There was also an earth magic somewhere... Oh, there.

Basic earth elemental magic, Rock.

A spell to harden dirt and turn it into stone or rock.

The shape could be controlled by the caster's will.

"Rock."

Ryoma cast the magic on the crumbled earth from the cliff and instantly turned it into a pebble.

"All right. Rock, Rock..."

He used the same magic to create a short spike out of the dirt, then Break Rock to shape the tip of it into that of an animal fang.

Once it was done, Ryoma grabbed the spike with an overhand grip and faced the cliff once more, taking a deep breath to use energy meditation.

"Hah!"

He wrapped his right arm and the tip of the spike with energy, then swung it down on the surface of the cliff with all his might.

The single collision between the towering cliff and energy enhanced spike made of the same material caused a groove as deep as the second knuckle of a finger to be carved into the cliff surface.

"All right!"

Seeing that result, Ryoma continued to swing his stick into the cliff, digging a hole at a pace exceptionally faster than when he was using magic.

"Ah! It's broken. Rock!"

By fixing his tool each time it broke, Ryoma had dug a cave with enough space for himself and his belongings by dusk.

However, since he had been continuously using a power he was unfamiliar with, he also felt a faint sense of fatigue.

I guess I'll stop here for today.

Ryoma turned to take his gathered food and water inside the completed base for the time being, when his eyes caught sight of a scenery that left him speechless.

"Wow..."

The outside view was colored in the fiery glow of the sunset.

The leaves in the trees were dyed crimson, while a bright green spread through the undergrowth and on the leaves out of the direct sunlight.

While his eyes were captivated by the beauty of the scenery, the sky gradually transitioned from dusk to a starry night.

How beautiful... There's so many stars. It's been so long since I've seen this many stars. No, when was the last time I even stopped to look at the scenery?

Even as he stared at the sky, he had no answer.

However, Ryoma was able to carry his belongings into the cave with some sense of satisfaction.

Taking a blanket out of his supplies, he made a place to sleep against the wall, then reached inside his supplies again for food.

Because he had chosen fruits and plants that could be eaten raw, there wasn't much in his portion.

But he was able to fill some of his stomach with half his total portion.

I'll save the rest for tomorrow and sleep for now. I'll start gathering food and other things I need to survive starting tomorrow. There's lots to do, but it's all worth doing.

He blocked the entrance of the cave for safety, leaving only a hole for air.

"Gain, Kufo, Lulutia... I am truly grateful to you all for your kindness."

Having finished his work for the day, Ryoma wrapped himself in the blanket and whispered his passing thoughts of his life to come, the words echoing into the darkness of the cave before disappearing.

Several minutes later, he was breathing peacefully in his sleep.



Meanwhile, three pairs of eyes peered at Ryoma's sleeping face from the divine realm. Their owners were Gain, Kufo, and Lulutia... In other words, the gods that had sent Ryoma to Seilfall.

"Looks like it's going well so far."

"Yes, he had no problem receiving the powers either."

"And he's made shelter for now. It seems like he'll be fine."

The three of them showed relief in the endlessly wide, white space that they stood in.

"Indeed. But let's keep watching over him for a while. Even with consent, it would pain me to see him suffer. And I'm a little curious anyway. Would you agree, Kufo, Lulutia?"

"Yup, I agree with Gain."

"Me too. But honestly, what was Earth's god thinking? Interfering with the fates of the living for no reason."

While Kufo approved of Gain's suggestion, Lulutia went on to express her clear disgust for Earth's god.

"Calm yourself, Lulutia. There's no point in wondering about that

now.”

“But doesn’t it bother you too, Gain?”

“Of course. He’s a fine specimen of a human, but you definitely don’t see many humans who have their fates tampered with like that. Not even a god would dare interfere with fate so flippantly. For one to take a person’s happiness is, quite honestly, reprehensible.”

“I can’t imagine why one would go out of their way to use trials to do that.”

Trials were a type of salvation originally meant to be presented by the gods managing the world onto a large collective such as a race or a kingdom in times of great, imminent danger. The decision to present the trial and timing of when to do so was entrusted to the judgment of the world’s gods, but overcoming the trial meant a befitting power could be obtained. Many of the heroes spoken of in legends had used the power they gained to drive away the threat just like this.

“The goal was to present hardship, but a trial is still a trial. Overcoming that hardship would result in receiving a power...”

“It seems like each occurrence was continuously suppressed at the level of everyday misfortune or bad luck, and for an awfully long time at that...”

“They say that enough dust can make a mountain, after all. The fact that the power he received was useless for his work and fortune was also rather wicked. Well, it was fortunate that his body was strengthened instead, I guess. If not...”

“We only realized it because of that, after all. And from what I can see of his memories, his father also...”

The gods continued to chat until the completely oblivious Ryoma woke up.

Chapter 1 Episode 1: Three Years Later

Three years after Takebayashi Ryoma hid himself away in the Forest of Gana to devote himself to training his martial arts and magic...

He still had no intention of leaving the forest.

“All right, all right... It’s food time!”

The crude cave that had been his dwelling had been widened with his improved earth magic, a barrier placed at the entrance to secure the safety of his home. He also had furniture made of hardened dirt he had got from digging out the cavern.

More than enough food could be acquired from the blessings of the forest, which he could determine the safety of eating with the knowledge received from the gods and the neutral magic Appraisal. Within such a comfortable environment, Ryoma didn’t have any strong desire to leave the forest, instead spending his time enjoying the hobbies he couldn’t have in his previous life.

One particularly devoted hobby was the research of ‘slimes.’ In the beginning, he had captured a slime by simply trying the ‘taming magic’ he had been bestowed with, which somehow led to the decision of keeping it as a pet. Half a year later, he woke up one morning to see the slime was a different color. Fearing it had fallen sick, he hurriedly used the taming magic Monster Appraisal to find that it had evolved into a species of slime called the sticky slime.

From that day onwards, Ryoma became interested in slime evolution and spent much of his time observing them. And the first thing he learned was that wild slimes were at the bottom of the ecosystem. Because slimes did not possess the power to hunt prey, Ryoma was yet to witness a wild slime eating a proper meal. However, he would feed them the leftovers of his own meals, as well as carcasses of the green caterpillars he often came across on his hunts. In other words, Ryoma’s slimes ingested much more nutrition than their wild counterparts on a daily basis.

Furthermore, the green caterpillars in the meals were capable of spitting out a sticky string. Ryoma formed a hypothesis that one of these differences was what caused the slime’s evolution, so he captured new slimes and continuously fed them green caterpillars and food. Two months later, the slimes that had only consumed green

caterpillars had all evolved into sticky slimes.

In addition, the slimes with green caterpillars removed from their diet as a controlled variable had evolved into a different species of slime. It was from this point that Ryoma's interest grew significantly, leading to huge numbers of slimes being captured and fed assorted leftovers and gathered materials, resulting in the six species of slime Ryoma presently kept.

Slime x13

The weakest monsters of the world, existing everywhere. Omnivorous, with an average diameter of 20cm. These mysterious creatures will die when the core within their jelly-like body is damaged, causing everything other than the core to disappear.

Skills: Consume 2, Absorb 3, Split 1

Sticky Slime x153

A creature of the same size as the regular slime, capable of forming a highly sticky solution in its body. It can either spit the sticky fluid directly, or hide and use it in traps to capture prey.

Skills: Strong Sticky Solution 4, Hardening Sticky Solution 1, Sticky String Shot 1, Jump 1, Consume 3, Absorb 3, Split 3

In the beginning, its only skills were strong sticky solution and the three basics: consume, absorb, and split, but it eventually learned hardening sticky solution and jump as well, which was how Ryoma learned that monsters could also acquire skills through training. Sticky string shot was discovered when Ryoma was investigating the qualities of the strong sticky solution and hardening sticky solution alongside evolution, mixing the two solutions to create a string shape. When he tested whether the same phenomenon could occur within the slime's body, all the training led to the acquisition of those skills.

Acid Slime x100

A slime with exceptionally high digestive ability, capable of consuming less-digestible material such as animal bones. After being discovered in the process of researching evolution, its numbers increased through splitting.

Skills: Acid Production 3, Acid Resistance 3, Jump 1, Consume 4, Absorb 3, Split 2

Poison Slime x188

Slimes that have been continuously fed poisonous plants. A fair number of slimes had been unable to resist the poison and died, but those that survived evolved. After that, their numbers increased

through splitting.

Skills: Poison Production 3, Poison Resistance 3, Paralyzing Poison Production 3, Jump 1, Consume 3, Absorb 3, Split 3

Cleaner Slime x11

Slimes drank water often, but there were some which were oddly insistent on drinking Ryoma's bathwater after he was done washing. Seeing no issue with that, Ryoma allowed them to do as they wished, which resulted in this evolution.

Skills: Cleanse 4, Deodorize 6, Deodorant Solution 4, Disease Resistance 5, Poison Resistance 5, Jump 1, Consume 3, Absorb 3, Split 1

Scavenger Slime x457

When Ryoma was unhappy with the smell coming from the toilet and waste disposal area he had created in the cave, he recalled how slimes liked to swarm around rotting corpses and threw twenty newly captured slimes into the room. As a result, the slimes acquired the skill to digest the things they ate and expel the nutrients as fertilizer, along with the tendency to split more often than the other slimes.

Skills: Disease Resistance 5, Poison Resistance 5, Foul Feeder 5, Cleanse 6, Deodorize 6, Deodorant Solution 4, Stench Release 4, Nutrient Reduction 3, Jump 1, Consume 6, Absorb 3, Split 6

There weren't many species, as he had switched his focus from evolving them to rearing them partway through, but their numbers were over 900.

Ryoma's personality meant he wasn't bothered by simple and repetitive tasks to begin with, so with no one to stop him in this situation he had lost sight of where to stop. However, that lifestyle was what healed Ryoma's tired heart and gave him vitality. This allowed him to live his life steadily despite the occasional encounter with bandits or large beasts, which Ryoma could deal with using his own powers and army of slimes.

And so, Ryoma would go on living in this way...

Or so he had thought, when fate came knocking one day.

It was during his daily hunt when, instead of prey, he spotted five armored people in the forest.

It's rare to see people around these parts. Their equipment looks too uniform for them to be bandits... This might be my first time seeing people who aren't bandits in this world. Well, I am a recluse living in the depths of the forest... Oh, is there someone injured?

Hidden in the thickets behind the trees, he observed from a

distance, and saw one person was leaning on his companion's shoulder, wrapped in bloody bandages instead of armor.

"U-Urgh..."

"Hang in there, Hughes!"

"Camil, how's your magic energy?"

"Sorry, it's still..."

He doesn't look too good... They don't seem to be bandits, so I can't turn a blind eye... I can at least let them rest at my place. If they turn out to be bandits, I have my emergency measures in place anyway.

Ryoma stepped out of the thicket he was hiding in to call out to them. However...

What should I say to them? 'Good day?' No, this isn't the time to be so carefree. 'Oi! You lot!' That would just make them wary, and it'd be rude to boot. Really, what should I say to them?!

Although Ryoma had stepped forth with the intention to help, it had been three years since he had last spoken to anyone else. He found himself faltering, unable to decide on what to say, during which time the group on high alert had spotted him.



“Hey! Who goes there?!”

“Wait.”

The person leading the group immediately pointed a sword at Ryoma, but was stopped by a man behind him who slowly walked forward.

“Sorry for pointing a sword at you. We were a little on guard. What might you be doing here? This isn’t a place for children. Are you lost?”

Ryoma was questioned, though he was still having trouble finding his words.

“I was... hunting.”

“Hunting? By yourself?”

Rather than words, Ryoma nodded in confirmation.

“This is a dangerous place, but... Oh well. Did you need something from us?”

Ryoma pointed at the injured person.

“He’s... injured.”

When Ryoma reached into the leather bag at his waist with his empty hand, the man with the sword stepped forward and pointed it once more, as though to protect the other man. Ryoma realized the knife he had equipped next to his leather bag was probably the reason for that reaction and jumped back, swiftly taking out his homemade medicine and offering it with both hands to show he had no ill intentions.

“...Is that medicine?”

The man with the sword asked after seeing that, at which Ryoma nodded before forming his words with difficulty.

“Injury... bad... Use medicine.”

“You’re letting us use that medicine?”

“Hurry.”

The men exchanged glances, but the slender man named Camil accepted the medicine bottle warily and checked its contents before feeding it to the injured person. When the injured man regained some of the color in his face, the attitude of the men towards Ryoma softened a little.

“You have my gratitude for giving us your medicine. Hughes should last a bit longer with this.”

“Can rest... at home. Should rest.” *This is pathetic, even for me...*

With his clumsy words, Ryoma slowly but successfully managed to invite the group home. He led them into the forest and through the trees, proceeding at a slow pace for the injured person. On the way, their whispered discussions reached his ears.

“What is a child doing in a place like this?”

“He still looks pretty young...”

Well, I am eleven years old right now. Being this deep in the forest is suspicious. That being said, it doesn't feel nice being doubted like this. I'd like them to feel less wary... Should I try making small talk? No, I don't have anything other than the backstory prepared to explain why I'm here... I might end up digging my own grave if I made small talk.

“Is there really a place we can rest up ahead?”

“I don't know. But the potion earlier definitely had an effect, so he doesn't seem hostile.”

“Some hunters create safe zones within the forest where they can hide. He may have some kind of campsite.”

Exactly! As long as you don't attack me, I have no intention of fighting either. That's right, I should check whether my traps have caught anything. That way I can prepare a meal while their injured member is resting. If I do that much for them, anyone reasonable would be a bit more friendly.

Ryoma came to a stop and called over the sticky slime he had on standby next to the traps, using the effect of the taming contract. But to those beside him, it looked like Ryoma had just came to a sudden stop.

“What's wrong?”

“Trap... caught prey... Be here soon.” Ryoma said, casually observing the one who had spoken to him.

Is he the most important person here? Everyone was following his orders earlier, including the man with the sword. Maybe the rest are his escorts or something.

Ryoma thought to himself, when the grass rustled and parted to reveal the sticky slime with a horned rabbit's carcass in tow. However, the man beside him swiftly drew his sword, unaware that it was Ryoma's familiar.

Oh no!

Ryoma leaped forward and picked up the slime and trapped kill.

“...Is that slime your familiar?”

The action had alerted the man that the slime was a familiar, to which Ryoma nodded his head furiously. The man gave Ryoma and the slime another look before sheathing his sword again.

“My apologies. I didn't realize it was a familiar.”

As long as we've cleared up the misunderstanding, it's fine. I haven't been using enough words to express myself, either.

A slime was still a monster, so it was only natural to think of ones in the forest as wild. Ryoma put the slime and kill away in his bag and started to walk again. This time, with a conversation based on the incident just now.

“But that slime sure brings back memories. My first contract was with a slime as well.”

“...A tamer?”

“A former tamer. I haven’t formed a contract since the familiar I bonded with retired from old age. I used to have a red horse and blizzard ape in the past, though.”

“...Amazing...?” *I don’t really know those monsters...*

“I come from a family which has been taming for many generations, so we’re taught various tricks and techniques from a young age. I don’t particularly excel in any area of magic, but I do have a certain level of pride in my sword arm.”

Generations of a family. And with personal escorts. This person is either a noble or someone rich and influential. Or maybe someone with such connections... Wait, calm down. I was informed in advance that this kingdom is more tolerant regarding the social gap between nobility and commoners. The gods picked this kingdom on purpose, because it was easy to live in. Based on his actions until now, there’s still plenty of room to be friends. If I think of it as a business party with no higher or lower statuses... But I can’t let down my guard either way.

Ryoma was in a slight panic, as he gathered his thoughts in his head and walked around retrieving the kills from his traps.

Ten minutes later, they arrived at the cliff where Ryoma’s home was.

Chapter 1 Episode 2: The Mysterious Boy

Reinhart's Side

"Please wait," the boy said as we reached the cliff.

It didn't look like there was anything around us, so I thought we were waiting for more kills to be delivered. The boy stepped forward and placed a hand against the bare rock, crumbling part of it away with earth magic. Apparently, it was past there.

"Come in..."

So this was his 'home.' Indeed, it wouldn't be easy for a monster or wild animal to break into that. The cave seemed very sturdy. On top of that, the boy used barrier magic over the entrance once he confirmed we were all inside. With that, it made a more than suitable place to rest. However, barrier magic was a difficult magic to obtain. Like me, Camil also took an interest in that and started talking to the boy as he worked.

"Is this barrier magic? That's an unusual magic to use. Is it for a camouflage effect?"

"You can leave... any time... Don't worry."

"I see. Thanks for that..."

After he answered with a simple nod, he slipped past us with his small body and went further into the cave.

"It looks like we made him worry needlessly."

"So it seems, Lord Reinhart."

"The kid's leaving, you two."

"Yeah, we're right behind you."

After Zeph called out to us, we went further into the cave to find a room with neatly leveled walls, decorated in furniture made from wood and stone. Magic stones were embedded into the wall as lights, making the interior fairly bright.

"This is..."

"It's a much better home than I was expecting."

"Injured person... lie down... here."

"Thanks. Hold on, Hughes, we're lying you down."

"O-Okay..."

"Potion... will get."

Once Hughes was lying in the bed, we watched him walk down

the corridor opposite the entrance.

“Phew, at least we can take a breather now.”

“Yes. This is more than sufficient, certainly more than I expected. Hughes should be able to rest well here.”

“We’ll have to thank him.”

“...”

Hmm... After lowering Hughes into the bed, Zeph was looking around the room sternly. Zeph had the most knowledge about hidden traps and stealth among the escorts, so he was the one in charge of scouting. If he was making such a grim expression, then...

“Zeph, is something the matter?”

“Don’t you find this room odd? Not that I think it’s a trap, but there’s only one set of furniture, despite the traces of someone living here for a long time.”

It wouldn’t be strange for a campsite to be understocked, but upon closer inspection, the walls were covered with drawings of animals and a map of the forest, and there were musical instruments resting in a corner of the room. It was plain and unrefined, but it somehow felt like a child’s bedroom. And like Zeph had said, there was only enough furniture for one person. That was indeed strange.

“Is that boy living here alone?”

“Impossible. I was surprised by how the boy could use taming magic, barrier magic, and earth magic, but there’s no way he could live in this forest alone. There surely has to be someone else living nearby.”

“It’s possible he’s older than he looks, too. Though he didn’t seem like an elf...”

As Camil and Jill discussed the possibilities, the boy in question appeared with his slime and a large number of bottles.

“Potions...”

“Thank you, we will definitely repay you for this.”

“No... I make them... Have lots.”

Those words made everyone look between the boy and the potion bottles, before Camil yelled in surprise first.

“You made these potions?!”

The volume of his voice made the boy flinch, but he immediately nodded his head in assent. Camil was being a little dramatic, but the potion from earlier was in no way inferior to those sold in the shops in town. What a mysterious child indeed.

“Have water.”

While I was thinking, the boy brought over some stone mugs filled with water. Pieces of ice, most likely made from magic, floated in the water, chilling it to perfection.

“Thank you.”

“Thanks.”

“Much appreciated.”

“Thanks again.”

“...Oh.”

“Hmm? What is it?”

“Name... is Ryoma.”

Come to think of it, we hadn't introduced ourselves yet.

“So your name is Ryoma? Apologies for the late introduction. My name is Reinhart Jamil, Duke of the Jamil domain. Thank you for lending your assistance in my subordinate's moment of crisis.”

“D-Du...?! Please forgive my insolence!”

I tried to address the boy named Ryoma as gently as possible, but the moment he heard my introduction, his already-stiff expression completely froze over and he bowed his head deeply.

Although it was a little surprising how smoothly his words were suddenly coming out...

“No, no, please be at ease. You're our savior, there's no need for you to adjust your speech.”

Judging by his reaction, he didn't know I was from a ducal house. I had him raise his head for now, but he looked too troubled to speak any further. I didn't think he had been rude at all...

“Umm, I'm Camil, a magician serving as Lord Reinhart's escort. It's nice to meet you. Thank you so much for earlier, I was out of magic so I couldn't use my healing magic. If you hadn't appeared, who knows what might have happened to Hughes... Ah, Hughes is the injured one lying down. Also, you really don't need to worry about how you speak. Lord Reinhart isn't the type to get angry over the slightest thing.”

Camil, who had also been watching him, spoke up too.

“He keeps people like us around, after all. Ah, I'm Zeph, the scout. Nice meeting you, kid. And this guy here is...”

“Jill. Sorry for pointing my sword at you earlier.”

“No... Natural... to be cautious.”

“I'm grateful you see things that way. I'm a noble too, but I didn't find your manners unpleasant at all. That's why, well... Lord Reinhart is a very accepting person. You can just be yourself.”

“...Thank you very much.”

Zeph, and even Jill — who wasn't good with kids — spoke gently to avoid scaring the boy, who thought for a moment before replying. The tense look on his face eased slightly. His words were still stiff and awkward, but there was no need to point that out.

“We're the ones being offered medicine and a place to rest. We should be thanking you.”

“No problem. But... why?”

Was he asking how Hughes had gotten his injury? Or was he asking why we had come that far into the forest? Let's see... I'd better explain things in order.

"We were on our way back to my home in Gaunago Town, detouring around the forest on horseback, when we were attacked by bandits."

"Bandits... hurt him?"

"No, the bandits weren't powerful enough. I only had these guys as escorts due to short notice, so they probably thought they could overwhelm us with numbers. Hughes was actually injured by a black bear that came out of the forest during the battle."

"Hughes was unlucky and got attacked in the middle of another duel."

"While the victory was ours, the horses ran away and we wanted to get Hughes to town as quickly as possible to treat his wound. That's why we gave up on the detour and tried to go through the forest."

After the explanation from me, Jill, and Camil, the boy nodded in understanding.

Great, that was the perfect opening for me to ask some questions myself.

"What are you doing here? You said you were hunting earlier, and it looks like you've been living here for a long time. But to be hunting at your age, using all those spells, and even making potions... I'm surprised."

"I learned... from grandparents. Former... adventurers."

Oh, so he had grandparents.

"Are the two of them out right now?"

Hearing that, the boy lowered his head.

"Passed away."

"I see... Sorry about that."

"It's okay. It was... three years ago."

""""""Three years?!""""""

"How long have you lived here alone?!"

"Three years ago, I left... village... Was outsider... everyone hated."

Was it a nativist village? That was probably the gist of it. Some places were worse than others, but...

"Before... they died... they said... go to different town."

It was from that point that he became unsociable, wandering around while living off the skills his grandparents had taught him until he took up residence in this forest. Since then, he had never left this forest. If he hadn't left the forest in three years, then he would have had zero social interaction.

His level of speech had bothered me at the start, but... I'd heard

about the rare cases where criminals imprisoned for extended periods of time lose their language skills because of their limited interaction with others. This could be one of the reasons for his struggling speech.

"I understand your situation. However, I don't believe you should continue to live in the forest like this. There are strong beasts and monsters in the forest. Even if you have the skills, it's still dangerous."

"Don't worry. I've lived here... three years."

"Still..."

"That's right! Wait a minute."

Camil suddenly interrupted, digging through his belongings to take out a small crystal that fit in the palm of his hand.

"Here it is! This should do it."

"What... is that?"

"This is a miniature identification crystal! It's an easy way to prove your identity and check your four highest-level skills. It'll glow red if a criminal touches it, and blue otherwise. After that, it'll show your name, race, age, and the four top skills. If you have any high-level combat skills, I won't oppose you."

I see, so he was going for the skill approach to make his point. Not to mention, if we used that...

"Okay..."

The boy agreed and reached for the crystal, before pausing as though remembering something.

"Before, bandits... They attacked, I killed... Would that be... crime?" he asked Camil.

"If they were bandits, it shouldn't be a problem."

He seemed to accept that and touched the crystal, which then glowed with a blue light. Killing bandits aside, this meant that he had never committed a crime. Strictly speaking, the true function of the crystal wasn't to 'identify criminals,' but it still provided another source of relief for us.

.....?

When I looked at Camil's face, I noticed his expression had paled while watching the crystal.

"Wh-What in the world..."

"What's wro—?!"

Jill looked over his shoulder and gasped too. When Zeph and I peered at the crystal next, we found a rather shocking issue with his skills.

The skills that had appeared were as follows:

Housekeeping 10, Mental Pain Resistance 9, Physical Pain Resistance 8, Health 7

What were these levels?! Housekeeping was still excusable, as it was fairly common. But his physical pain resistance, mental pain

resistance, and health were all seven or higher. Just what kind of an environment would result in levels like this... Not to mention, if he was 11 now, that meant he had been living here since the age of 8.

“What’s... wrong?”

“U-Umm... Unfortunately, no combat skills came up...”

That’s what you want to focus on?! I would have said that aloud, but one look at Camil had me realizing the other two were reacting in the same way. We kept communicating with our eyes, but no one wanted to break the silence.

Because pain resistance skills were only obtained by growing accustomed to pain, one could only conclude that he had suffered pain equivalent to his level. There were probably memories he didn’t want to recall as well. Asking questions carelessly could end up hurting him more. Considering his actions up until now and the fact the light had glowed blue, there were still some unclear points about him, but he didn’t seem dangerous. It was better for us to leave this discussion aside for now.

“Excuse me, may I use your toilet?”

“I need to go too.”

“I’ll accompany ‘em.”

“Toilet is at back... Lots of slimes... Don’t attack.”

“It’s all right, I’m a former tamer myself. I won’t lay a hand on your familiars.”

Thus Camil was left to look after Hughes while we followed the boy...

“This is amazing...”

“Yeah... I’ve never seen so many slimes at once.”

An immense number of slimes were freely wriggling about in the back room and connecting corridors. They parted to make way for us on Ryoma’s command, but if they hadn’t, we would have definitely stepped on a few.

“Ryoma, are all of these slimes your familiars?”

“Yes... For research.”

“What kind of research?”

“Evolution... of slimes.”

Now that he mentioned it, practically all of the slimes within view were more than just normal slimes. Sticky slimes, poison slimes, and what were probably acid slimes. There were also two other types of slimes I didn’t recognize. They must be another kind of advanced species.

Slimes were monsters that could be found anywhere. It wasn’t unusual for advanced species to be found in random locations, but there hadn’t been reports of such discoveries in this forest for years. Like Jill, this was my first time seeing so many advanced species at

once as well.

“Doing research at your young age is impressive. It’s a little unfortunate that they’re all slimes, though...”

“Are slimes... bad?”

I personally believed that taming all these advanced species was a feat to be commended. However, the general public’s perception of slimes was quite low.

“This isn’t the nicest way to put it, but slimes are weak even after evolving, so they’re seen as worthless. They’re used by tamers and summoners as a safe way to learn the basics, but... Most tamers will discard their slimes and move on to the next familiar once they’ve learned the basics. Even when it comes to pets, other monsters like the horned rabbit are much more popular.”

“...Harsh world.”

Were those the thoughts of an eleven-year-old?

“But that’s just the opinion of the majority; not all tamers think that way. At the very least, those who underestimate poison slimes and acid slimes will pay for it. They even have more combat power than a horned rabbit.”

“Slimes... very useful... Help out a lot.”

I thought he would be disappointed to hear they were seen as lowly, but that wasn’t the case. He didn’t seem bothered at all. That in itself wasn’t a bad thing, but children his age would normally be more active in seeking the approval of others. His background was unclear, but he didn’t seem dangerous.

If anything, he was a good kid who had helped us out in a pinch. However, he definitely wasn’t a normal child. I couldn’t leave this boy alone, for many reasons.

That was what I strongly felt...

Chapter 1 Episode 3: Parting

“Ugh...! Hah, hah...”

When Ryoma and the others returned to the room, Hughes’s condition had worsened.

“Hughes!”

“Hang in there!”

“The bleeding stopped thanks to the potions and healing magic, but now he has a fever. And a fairly severe one at that...”

“Fever reducer... I have.”

While beads of sweat ran down Hughes’s flushed face as he groaned at the voices calling out to him, Ryoma went running into another room at Camil’s words.

“Good thing we ran into that kid, right boss?”

“Yeah. If we hadn’t met him here, there’s no doubt Hughes would be beyond saving.”

“It’s still too early to relax, but my healing magic wouldn’t have been enough without him. Healing magic can’t reduce fevers, after all.”

“He may have been fine under normal conditions, but after losing as much blood as he did...”

Once they finished discussing the state of their companion, the topic changed to Ryoma.

“So what will you do? The kid shouldn’t be living in this forest alone, it’s dangerous.”

“He’s already lived here for three years, so I think he’s aware of the dangers.”

“He’s survived here up until now, after all... Not to mention those resistance skills he had. With those levels, his village must have been a terribly harsh environment. Would he understand if we told him the town was safe...? Seeing people may scare him into a sudden rampage.”

“Yeah... There was someone who caused such an incident before, if I recall.”

“As a father, do you have any ideas, Lord Reinhart?”

“You’re the only one among us with a kid, boss. We have no idea what to do.”

“The same goes for me. I can’t leave him alone, but I can’t imagine anything good would come out of forcing him away... Either

way, I want to return first and discuss this more with Father and Elise.”

A silence fell between them, until several minutes later Ryoma returned with a slime carrying a jug of water and medicine. Ryoma himself carried a blanket made of fur under one arm, while the vital medicine and water was being carried by the slime.

“Umm, thank you.”

“Treatment first.”

Ryoma said, covering Hughes’s body with the blanket before transferring water from the slime’s jug to a drinking cup, then handing it to Camil.

“Tilt it... and drink.”

Ryoma pointed at Hughes’s mouth and Camil moved to obey.

“...It looks like he was able to drink it.”

Hearing those words, Ryoma next offered the medicine.

“Fever reducer.”

“Thank you, that’s perfect,” Reinhart said, accepting the medicine and feeding it to Hughes.

Roughly an hour later, Hughes’s condition had stabilized enough for Reinhart and his men to relax. That was when Ryoma suggested they stay the night, as it was already getting dark. The party decided to gratefully accept his offer, having deemed Ryoma to be friendly from what they had gone through, and in consideration of Hughes’s condition.

That night’s dinner was a stir-fry of Ryoma’s own cave-grown bean sprouts and rabbit soup. While it was a simple meal to Ryoma, Reinhart’s party was more than grateful for all the hospitality and medicine provided. And thus, the night wore on.



The next day.

Thanks to the medicine and nursing, Hughes showed better recovery than expected overnight. He could stand on his own feet and was able to leave Ryoma’s home with Reinhart by noon.

“Man, I really thought I was a goner. You sure saved me, kid!”

“Are you... really... okay?”

“Aww, are you worried about me? I heard you didn’t want to go to any village or town, so I thought you hated people!”

“I still... worry... for injured people.”

“Gahahah! I see, I see! My bad, then! Oops...”

The force of Hughes’ laughter sent him staggering into Reinhart and Camil beside him.

“Hughes, are you all right?”

“Y-Yeah, just got a little dizzy for a sec. It’s no problem.”

“You’re still recovering, so try not to push yourself.”

Seeing that, Ryoma took out a bottle he had prepared in advance.

“Drink.”

“Hmm? What’s that bottle?”

“Hematopoietics... Need to... produce more blood.”

“Hematopoietics, huh? Thanks. I’ll drink it right awa— Ugh, that stinks! What is this smell?!”

The force of Hughes’s recoil sent the foul stench of grassy medicinal herbs blended with green caterpillar corpses into the surrounding air. The smell reached not only Hughes, but Jill and Zeph beside him too, making them contort their faces.

“Old recipe... Not made anymore. The smell... hindered sales. Can guarantee... effect... though.”

“Well, you heard him. He’s giving it to you out of pure good will, so drink up.”

“B-But this is...”

“We can’t have you collapsing on us on the way there either.”

“We were worried for you too, after all.”

Jill and Zeph grabbed a shoulder each and stopped Hughes from his attempted escape...

“I’m sorry!”

Camil made eye contact, grabbed the blood producer and poured it into Hughes’ mouth.

“%#\$%\$!!!”

Hughes made an inhuman sound and spasmed several times, supporting himself against the wall afterward.

At a glance, it looked like he had ingested poison, but it was actually a very safe and effective medicine.

It just smelled and tasted revolting.

“Y... You idiots...”

“If the medicine tastes awful, that means it works, Hughes.”

“Don’t worry, this kid’s medicines are effective.”

“The potion he used for your treatment was also of good quality.”

“Damn it, argh... I thought I was gonna die... Urgh...”

Ryoma handed a cup of water to Hughes, who looked nauseous from the scent of the medicine in his mouth.

“Need... armor?”

“Phew... Hmm? Come to think of it, my armor was done in by that bear. I don’t have weapons, either.”

“Have equipment... Take it.”

“I’d be grateful for that, but are you sure?”

“Sure.”

After answering Hughes’ question, Ryoma went into the back room and returned several minutes later with a dozen or so slimes

carrying five spears and three sets of armor.

“This... can use.”

“You sure have some good stuff for bandit gear. Are you sure you want to give them to Hughes?”

“Weapons should be used... Leaving them... No use...”

“Spears like this would go for five small gold coins, you know?”

“Take it.”

Surprised at the quality of the equipment, Jill and Hughes checked many times, but Ryoma was insistent that they take it.

In the end, Hughes folded first.

“...Then I'll gratefully accept them. But it isn't my style to just be on the receiving end. I can't repay you right now, but if you ever need anything, you can count on me. If you tell the gatekeeper of the Jamil estate in Gaunago that you want to see the lord's escort Hughes, you'll be able to contact me. There's no need to hold back.”

“Got it.”

And so, the party of five finished their preparations for their journey and departed. In the third year of his otherworld life, Ryoma finally had a proper interaction with other people. Ryoma felt tired and nostalgic after his first human conversation in a long time, but still set off for his daily hunt again.

Unaware that this meeting was about to change his life in a dramatic way...

Chapter 1 Episode 4: The Duke Returns

Two weeks had passed since the duke's party went home. Ryoma was busy spending his days hunting and looking after slimes, when one day four people suddenly visited his home.

“Oi! Ryoma! Hey, it's me! Hughes! Not an enemy!”

The one yelling in front of his home was the person who had been injured when he visited two weeks prior — Hughes. With him were Jill, Camil, and Zeph, who had also been there. They stood outside the rock sealed entrance of the house and yelled loudly to be heard inside... only for Ryoma to come out of the thicket behind them.

“I'm... over here!”

“Whoa! Oh, you were outside.”

“I was hunting... Why are you here?”

“We wanted to thank you properly for before. That's why we've brought presents... But there's quite a few, so we left them in a spot a bit further from here; along with Lord Reinhart and his family, two maids, and their butler who can use space magic. Sorry to spring this upon you, but do you have time now? If you're busy, we can come back another day.”

Ryoma thought for a moment, but he didn't have anything in particular going on, and wasn't about to turn them away for no reason after they'd come so far either. Once he agreed, the four escorts went into the forest to call the others over. In that time, Ryoma called back all the slimes he had sent out hunting and went about preparing to welcome his guests.

After the preparations were completed roughly 30 minutes later, Ryoma and his thousand-odd clamoring slimes basked in the sun as they awaited their rare guests. Eventually, Reinhart's party appeared.

The slimes started to vibrate in response to the approaching people. That prompted Ryoma to check the state of his clothes one more time before looking at the figures.

There were a total of eleven people. Behind Reinhart stood a woman and a young girl, both unfamiliar but beautiful. They were followed by a man who was elderly but walked upright in a dignified manner, and further behind him were the two maids and the butler Hughes had mentioned. They proceeded in a formation sandwiched between the four escorts.

Based on their clothes, the three behind Reinhart must be his family. But the butler clothes and maid outfits sure stand out... Isn't it hard to move around the forest like that?

"...Is that the boy?"

"There are so many slimes..."

"Oh ho. I'd heard he had tamed a lot of slimes, but I wasn't expecting this many."

"They may be slimes, but being able to control that many is impressive."

"The more familiars they have, the harder it is for a tamer to form a contract, after all."

They approached while Ryoma was questioning the practicality of maid outfits, and the young maid made a face at the large number of slimes. In contrast, the three members of Reinhart's family were gazing at the slimes in interest.

Once they arrived in the area before Ryoma's house, Reinhart walked up to Ryoma.

"It's been two weeks since then, Ryoma. I'm sure you've heard already, but today we came to repay our debt to you. We brought some presents."

"Thank you very much."

"Oh no, they're just a sign of our gratitude."

"Honey, why don't you introduce us first?"

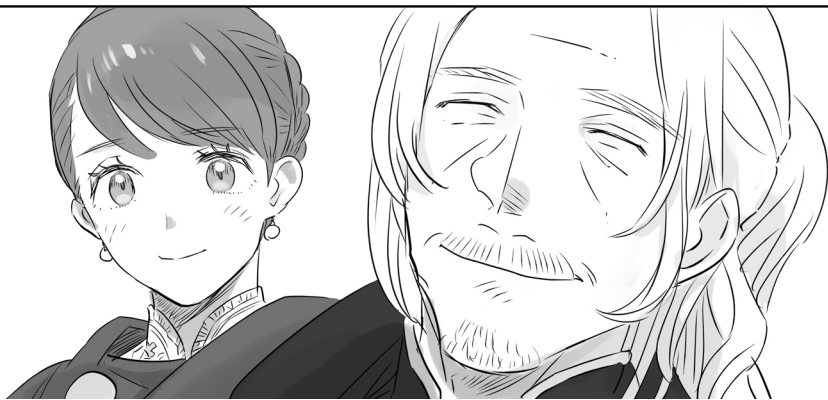
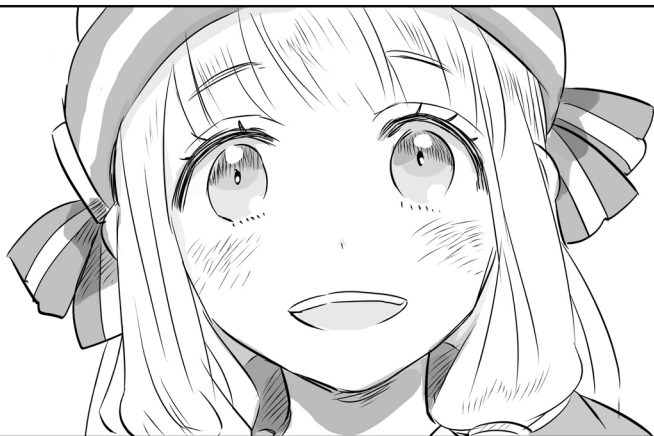
The beautiful woman called out from behind Reinhart, reminding him of introductions.

"Allow me to introduce you. This is my father, Reinbach, wife, Elise, and daughter, Eliaria."

"I'm Reinbach Jamil, the previous head of the House of Jamil. Sorry for intruding on such short notice. It's nice to meet you."

"Elise Jamil. Thank you for helping my husband and his subordinates out the other day."

"Eliaria Jamil. Pleased to make your acquaintance."



“It is an honor to make your acquaintance... My name is Ryoma Takebayashi... Thank you for coming from so far away... I cannot offer much, but I welcome you to my home.”

Despite being disjointed, the unexpected manner of speech left the ducal house and their escorts around them with rounded eyes — Reinbach returned to his senses first.

“There’s no need for such polite speech. Please talk to us casually. We don’t need any hospitality either. We’re the ones intruding out of the blue.”

“Thank you very much. Please, come inside... Ah.”

Figuring it would be better to talk inside the house, Ryoma tried to invite them in when he realized all his slimes were blocking the entrance and ordered the slimes inside first.

“It really is an amazing number to see in the light... Is it just me, or have they increased a little?”

“...After you left... they split...”

Reinhart’s observation while watching the slimes rush inside the house was correct. Their numbers were as follows:

Sticky Slime x364

Poison Slime x323

Acid Slime x211

Cleaner Slime x11

Scavenger Slime x730

Healing Slime x2

They had, to put it bluntly, increased a little too much. As of late, Ryoma was having trouble maintaining their taming contract and feeding of all the slimes. He had now restricted their diets and was making sure their nutrition wasn’t being used on evolution or splitting.

Slimes didn’t need much food to just stay alive. He had been prepared to take responsibility and cull some of the numbers if it didn’t work out, but fortunately a goblin settlement had taken up residence in the forest in the past two weeks, so he managed to make do by eliminating them.

Furthermore, the goblin extermination bought more fortune than just food.

When Ryoma cast his healing magic in a panic on some of the slimes he saw were gravely wounded from goblin attacks. The next day, two of the surviving slimes had evolved into healing slimes, a new kind of slime that could use healing magic.

Healing Slime

Skills: Healing Magic 1, Life Enhancement 1, Photosynthesis 3, Consume 1, Absorb 1, Split 2

The birth of the healing slimes had sparked a fire within Ryoma once more, but he was holding back due to his current situation.

“Will they all fit inside the room?”

“It’s become... okay...”

“Become okay? What do you mean by that?”

“Watch...”

At Reinhart’s question, Ryoma gave the slimes an order. The biggest issue after they split was actually the matter of living space. However, that problem was solved by accident three days after they split. And the trigger for it had been a wild idea that popped into Ryoma’s head.

Ryoma had been looking at the slimes that overflowed from the living space made for the slimes into his own bedroom floor when he muttered, *“Why can’t these slimes combine or something? You know, like in Dr*g*n Q**st...”*

At that moment, all the slimes started vibrating intensely, and all the slimes of the same species gathered together and formed single slimes in no time at all. Ryoma appraised them all in a panic to see:

Big Sticky Slime x1

Skills: Strong Sticky Solution 5, Hardening Sticky Solution 4, Sticky String Shot 3, Physical Attack Resistance 1, Maximize 2, Minimize 4, Jump 2, Consume 3, Absorb 3

Big Poison Slime x1

Skills: Poison Production 4, Poison Resistance 4, Paralyzing Poison Production 4, Physical Attack Resistance 1, Maximize 2, Minimize 4, Jump 1, Consume 3, Absorb 3

Big Acid Slime x1

Skills: Acid Production 5, Acid Resistance 4, Physical Attack Resistance 1, Maximize 2, Minimize 4, Jump 2, Consume 4, Absorb 3

Huge Scavenger Slime x1

Skills: Disease Resistance 5, Poison Resistance 5, Foul Feeder 6, Cleanse 6, Deodorize 6, Deodorant Solution 4, Stench Release 5, Nutrient Reduction 4, Physical Attack Resistance 2, Maximize 3, Minimize 5, Jump 2, Consume 6, Absorb 3

Ryoma had been surprised at first, but when he ordered the slimes

to change back, they returned to their original number of separate slimes. Relieved, Ryoma repeated the experiment in excitement. As a result, he discovered that they could combine and separate as they pleased, forming a big slime when there were over 100 of the same species, and a huge slime when there were more than 500. For the record, slime numbers under 100 couldn't combine, and it was precisely at the end of 499 and the start of 500 where the name changed from big to huge.

Fortunately, the combined slimes could use their minimize skill to shrink to a size slightly larger than a single slime. They still ate several times more than a single slime, but considering how they were a mass of hundreds of slimes, their diet was basically reduced to 2-5%.

In other words, they were able to drastically save on space and the amount of food needed, which made Ryoma wonder if this was a form of self-protection to maintain their living conditions and counter the shortage of food. He had no proof, but that's what he believed.

Furthermore, considering the fact that big slimes were formed from a minimum of 100 slimes of the same species and lost their splitting skill upon doing so, it was reasonable to believe slimes larger than big ones were also made by combining their respective species.

There were still unsolved questions like where all the extra mass went during combining and minimizing, but for now Ryoma was glad the matter of space and food was solved efficiently.

Thinking it would be easier to show than explain, Ryoma had ordered the slimes to combine in front of Reinhart and the others... But the sight left the three adults of the ducal house with wide eyes, the others falling silent as they stared intently.

"A big slime?!"

"No way!"

"No, there's no mistaking it... You tamed a big slime?"

"...Is that... weird?"

"Big slimes are a monster no one has been able to tame yet, you know?"

"Huh?"

Noticing how Elise's words confused Ryoma, Reinbach stepped in to explain.

"Certain advanced species of slimes like big slimes are unaffected by taming contracts, the crux of taming magic. Many have tried to tame them before, but there have been no successful attempts."

Hearing that, Ryoma understood.

"Taming contract... No point... Should be obvious..."

"And why is that?"

Everyone's eyes gathered on Ryoma, who looked slightly uncomfortable as he started to talk.

“Big slime... gathering of many slimes... Does not fulfill... conditions of taming contract. Only one contract can be formed at a time... Lots at once is impossible. Taming one among a hundred others... Cannot single out precisely. Because it looks like one core... That’s why taming contract... has no effect. I... tamed lots of slimes... gathered them... and they became this.”



Ryoma’s Side

...What happened? Everyone’s got a scary look in their eyes — especially the adults of the family. Did I do something wrong?

“Marvelous.”

Huh? Did something happen? What was marvelous?

“That’s amazing, Ryoma! You’ve solved one of the great taming mysteries of the world!”

“?!”

What’s up with these people?! Their eyes are so intent and they’re way too enthusiastic about this topic... It’s kinda scary!

“My Lady, Lord Reinbach, please calm down. You are frightening Master Ryoma.”

“Ah! I’m sorry, please don’t be scared.”

“My apologies, I got carried away there.”

“It’s... fine...”

“If I could explain the reason why they got excited... The reason you gave for why big slimes can’t be tamed is a mystery many tamers have tried to solve without success. Big slimes aren’t amazingly strong, but they’re difficult monsters to fight, which is why many people have tried to tame them to use as obstacles. Some people still try now and then. But...”

“As I said earlier, there have been no successful attempts. For a long time now, it has been researched by those who failed in their attempts and proud tamers who viewed the ineffectiveness of the taming contract a problem, as the contract is the heart of taming magic. However, none were able to come up with results and research efforts were reduced, leaving it unsolved until now. Then you came along and solved such a mystery all by yourself.”

Wow... Things sure took a crazy turn.

“Hmm... That’s a rather weak reaction. What if I put it like this? Research into why big slimes couldn’t be tamed started at the same time taming magic spread throughout this world. There were just no results coming out of it, so the current research institution treats it as a convenient and cushy payroll spot. A long unsolved mystery that

everyone gave up on... was solved by you! This is no time to be remaining calm!"

Could it be true? It was by total coincidence, but it seemed like things could get bothersome. What to do...

"What should we do?"

"Register him with the Tamers' Guild and announce it!"

Ah, was there some kind of institution that gathered information like that? Based on the reactions of these people, announcing it could turn into a huge deal, which seems bothersome... But it could be a good chance to leave the forest...

"Town, huh..."

The words that slipped out of my mouth caused the four family members and the maids and butler behind them to react.

"I'm sorry, I know you don't like towns..."

"We won't insist that you register and announce it, but this truly is a monumental discovery. Please understand that."

"I understand... Ah..."

The combining of slimes had unblocked the entrance.

"For now... come in, please."

There were monsters outside, so standing around for too long was dangerous. I let them all inside and started preparing tea in the back. It was just the other day that I discovered several tins of seemingly high quality tea leaves among the loot of some bandits that had attacked. Since they looked good and hadn't expired yet, it should be fine to serve them. The main problem was the cups.

Just like with the chairs and furniture, I didn't have enough for twelve people, so I had to make them with earth magic in a hurry. Next to the tea, I served some honey I gathered from a beehive the other day, as well as some ginger and fruit juice resembling lemon found on the same day to make a honey-lemon syrup. This was the only thing I had in place of sugar, so I hoped it would be all right...

"Sorry for... the wait. Have some tea."

"Oh my, thank you very much."

"It smells lovely, thank you."

"Hmm. It seems you have some rather good leaves."

"There were lots... among the bandits that attacked."

"I see... Oh ho, this is good."

"Yes, it is indeed."

"The flavor of the leaves has steeped well. Where did you learn to pour tea like this, Master Ryoma?"

In my previous life. Though I couldn't actually say that aloud...

"My grandmother... loved drinking tea..."

The almighty excuse: grandparents. I owed the gods a lot for coming up with this excuse. I was the type of person who couldn't

keep my own secrets, after all. They called me foolishly honest in my previous life... Though I didn't see it myself.

But for some reason, the lies came out of my mouth quite easily when they were decided for me beforehand. On top of that, it had been written in the gods' letter that they had even called out the souls of my would-be grandparents and received permission from them. I was truly grateful for that.

"If you like, help yourself... to some honey..."

"Thank you."

"I'll take some too. Honey's a high class item, so I don't get it often."

"H-Hughes!"

"I took it from a beehive... the other day... It was free... so please help yourself too, Camil."

"Oh, really? Then maybe just a little..."

"You're no different than me!"

That was when... Eliaria, I think it was? The young lady took a sip of the tea and noticed something.

"Oh? This honey isn't just honey, is it? Is there something in it?"

The butler immediately checked it. Was the giger (a ginger-like root) and lamon (a lemon-like fruit) a bad idea?

"There's lamon juice mixed into it. What a nice and refreshing taste. But that doesn't seem to be all."

Thank goodness, they didn't think it was poison! I should just reply honestly here. It's not like it actually *was* poison or anything.

"I added... giger roots."

"So this taste was giger. I've never considered it as anything more than a bitter plant, but the way it brings out this flavor is wonderful."

"...Giger, can be used in cooking... meat... fish... Gets rid of raw smell..."

"That is a very interesting fact to learn. I shall inform the head chef next time we return. Thank you very much, Master Ryoma."

"You're welcome."

"...Now, we got a little off track with all the surprises, but Ryoma, I've brought some things along today as a thank you for the other day. I'd love for you to accept them. Sebas."

"Right away. Item Box."

After drinking the tea and taking a breather, Reinhart brought up the topic of presents, prompting the butler sitting at the back to stand up and use his magic, causing a black circle to appear in midair. He stuck his hand into that circle and took something out of it.

Item Box.

It was one of the fundamental spells of the higher difficulty space magic that, as its name implied, could create a space for storing items.

That's why I could use it too, but... Weren't there a few too many gifts? The table before me was getting crowded with baskets of fruit and packages wrapped in paper and fabric appearing one after another.

"Umm, this many?"

"Yes. We didn't know what you would be happy to receive, so we brought a variety of things. I'd like you to take them."

Reinhart said as he unwrapped a package. There were various things inside, ranging from preserved foods to clothes, writing utensils and desk clocks that functioned based on the same magic stones used as lights. They were all practical items missing from my home. It seemed like they had brought all the things they saw were missing last time they were here.

"The clothing sizes were estimated roughly, so if they don't fit you... Araune, Lilian."

"Yes."

"If you ask these two, they'll adjust it for you immediately."

I had been wondering why the maids had come all the way out here, but was it really for this? I felt kind of bad for them, but at the same time I didn't have many clothes, so I was grateful. For now, I agreed to accept the items they offered as presents.

"Truly... thank you so much. For bringing... so many things."

"It was no big deal. We had business around here anyway."

"Business? Come to think of it... Something about the forest."

"Yes, do you remember how I told you about my family having generations of tamers? My daughter Eliaria has been studying until now, but it's about time she got her own familiar. We came here to capture a slime for her first contract."

Wow, her first contract. I guess she wasn't allowed one up until now, if he was saying it was about time. They were living creatures, so depending on the monster, they could be dangerous to care for. Well, either way, she was allowed one now.

"Congratulations."

When I said that to the young lady sipping her tea, she smiled bashfully and thanked me. Apparently, she was yet to form her contract.

"We searched on our way here, but there wasn't a single slime in sight."

"Slimes are monsters — living creatures — after all. There'll be some days when they don't show up."

"...Then, over here."

I stood up from my seat and pointed at a spot on the forest map on my wall.

"River. The slimes... go there often."

Wild slimes often went there to drink water. So they could probably find one or two if they focused their search on that area. For the record, the most I had ever captured at once was 14, while on my way to fetch water. Although that had been just the one time.

When I told her that, she informed the adults around her and received permission to go, before she turned back to me as though remembering something.

“May I call you Ryoma?”

“Go ahead.”

“Then, Ryoma. If it isn’t too much trouble, could you teach me how to choose slimes?”

“Choose?”

“Yes. I only need to capture one slime, so if there are many in one place I won’t know which one to capture...”

Oh, so that’s what she meant. But there weren’t any real differences between the slimes...

“If you’re choosing... you can choose a slime that fits the evolution you want... But, it will take time. If you want to fight... go with another monster. If you’re not keeping it for a long time... then there’s no need to spend time choosing... Do you still want to choose?”

“Yes, since it will be my first familiar. I shall treasure it forever.”

She sure had a pure smile directed my way... Well, I guess she really would treasure it, so it wouldn’t hurt to lend a hand...

Hm? Why did I come to such a conclusion just now? I’ve never been able to tell such things before... Was I being tricked? Charmed? Me, a mentally forty-something-year-old man, being rooked by a child?

...

...

...Let’s stop thinking about it.

“Is that all right?”

Well, I didn’t mind teaching her, but with my speech in its current state... I was already anxious about my use of words. If only I could speak a little more smoothly...

“If you’re fine with me... sure. But, you can only choose... out of three species.”

“What’s wrong with the other species?”

“One... Unknown evolution conditions... One... None of the right food to feed... One... Hard to make a lady do... Though the last one has the best abilities...”

“Excuse me, could I have a minute?”

While I was talking to Eliaria, her mother came to join our conversation. Her expression was extremely serious.

“Mother... I am the one talking right now. This is preparation for

my first contract, so I ask that you do not interfere.”

“I know that, but there’s something I can’t help but wonder about. Ryoma, it almost sounded as though you knew the conditions for slime evolution...”

“To an extent, yes.”

When I answered with that, Elise started muttering to Reinhart as though I confirmed her suspicions. Reinhart looked like he was shaking his head lightly...

‘I’ve never heard of such a thing!’

‘Neither have I, I’ve only heard it was being researched!’

...Or something like that?

“Could this be... like with the big slimes...”

“Yes, it is. Slimes exist everywhere, but they’re actually very mysterious creatures. That’s why you must be careful who you tell things to, understand?”

I thought it was a pretty simple thing, but... Well, there were plenty of things that hadn’t been explained in modern Japan, too. If there was anyone who researched slimes here, I’d like to talk to them one day.

But for now, what should I do...? I thought for a moment, but reached a conclusion rather easily. I’d tell them. To be honest, the results weren’t as important to me as the process. The reason why I began researching was because I had an interest in slimes. The process of researching was the fun part, so I didn’t really care about the results. Most importantly, I had already told them what I knew, so it was too late to hide anything anyway.

“It’s okay... The evolution condition of slimes... is food. Their diet... decides their evolution species... Sticky slimes eat green caterpillars... Poison slimes eat poisonous plants... Slimes have their own food preferences, leading to their most suitable evolution. If you keep feeding food against their preferences... their evolution is delayed... and can sometimes end... in death...”

“I see, so that’s the evolution condition of a slime.”

Eliaria expressed deep interest, so I nodded and continued speaking.

“If they have nutrition, they’ll evolve easily. When you feed them more, they’ll evolve faster... I use poisonous herbs, green caterpillars... cleaned animal bones... The slimes that gather around them... and respectively turn into... poison slimes, sticky slimes, acid slimes...”

“Which slimes couldn’t be chosen?”

“Cleaner slimes, scavenger slimes, healing slimes. But their abilities... are exceptional.”

The members of the ducal house only seemed to know of the healing slime, as they exchanged looks of confusion.

“What kind of slimes are cleaner slimes and scavenger slimes?”

“Their skills... cleanse and deodorize, are their characteristics.”

“Cleanse and deodorize? I’ve never heard of them.”

“I can tell deodorize has to do with eliminating odors, but what does cleanse do?”

“Would be easier... to show you... Please wait a moment...”

I went into the back and took a blood-soaked cloth from where I was preparing a rabbit in the kitchen, then returned to the room with a cleaner slime.

“Thank you for waiting... This is a cleaner slime... Watch...”

“A blood-soaked cloth? What are you going to do with it?”

“Look.”

I gave the cleaner slime an order in my head. The slime took the cloth I was holding into its body and began to spin it around its core. I’d seen it many times now, but it still looked exactly like a washing machine to me.

Ten seconds later, the slime spat out the cloth and picked it up with a tentacle-like extension of its body, handing it to me to show everyone clearly. The four members of the family showed a curious reaction at the sight, but the butler and two maids had a glint in their eyes.

“The blood is gone, right? And the color is a little different. Did it melt away?”

“It was just absorbed by the slime, wasn’t it?”

“No, My Lady. That’s not all.”

“Araune?”

The older one of the two maids reacted to Elise’s words. Apparently she was called Araune.

“Master Ryoma, that slime eats filth, doesn’t it?”

“That’s correct.”

“What does that mean?”

“Based on the material of that cloth, I believe it was covered in much more filth than just blood in its earlier state. Its current state is the original color of the cloth. Grime gets harder to wash off the more it builds up. Even if you spent time handwashing the earlier cloth, it may have never returned to its original color. In other words, the cleansing skill has the ability to remove even the most stubborn of grime, is that correct?”

“That’s partially correct... To be more precise... it ‘only’ removes the grime...”

I gave the slime an order and stuck my hand holding the cloth into the slime’s body.

“What?!”

“This is beyond words...”

A normal slime would consume everything it takes into its body. They probably thought my hand would melt off. The expressions of everyone in the room stiffened. However, my right hand was unaffected as I removed it from the slime five seconds later.

“Are you unharmed?”

“It only dissolves the filth... It’s a slime that only eats what it’s ordered to... be it humans or animal meat...”

“So such a slime exists...”

“Please don’t scare me like that, it’s bad for my heart.”

“Sorry... That was normal for me... Since it’s not a cloth I usually want to touch...”

“True, you couldn’t call that a clean cloth.”

“It used to be a goblin’s loincloth.”

When I said that, Eliaria frowned while the maids showed even more interest. This world *did* have the saying that ‘there’s nothing dirtier than a goblin’s loincloth.’

“With this slime, you can keep clean in any situation... You can’t bathe... while traveling... right?”

“Yes, the most we can do is wipe down our bodies. This is my first extended journey, and I felt disgusting after a single day without a bath...”

“This slime solves... that problem.”

The young lady whipped her head towards me at that. Scary! Her eyes and everything else were scary! Her mother and the two maids also had intense looks in their eyes.

“It eats... all the dirt and smell... from your body and clothes, so...”

“That one! The cleaner slime, I want that one!”

...Oh no, why did I make a sales pitch for the one I said couldn’t be chosen myself?! And it was the hardest one to talk about, too! Ugh, I must have gotten too excited about slimes... I should have talked about scavenger slimes instead!

“But the selection criteria for this one is...”

“No! After showing me such a wonderful slime, saying that is too mean!”

“Master Ryoma, as a maid from a family that has served the House of Jamil for generations, I have also learned the basics of taming magic. Please teach us the method of choosing a cleaner slime.”

“I want to know too!”

All the women seemed rather invested... it must have been pretty important to them. The men had all backed away a bit, and the four escorts looked completely unconcerned.

“Ryoma... I ask that you refrain from upsetting the women...”

"It's hard to say... in front of ladies..."

"It's something you can't tell them?"

"No, I don't mind telling. It's just... hard to say."

"If they're the ones asking for it, shouldn't it be fine?"

Camil caught my gaze and asked casually, trying to mediate between us. I took the four escorts with me into a corner of the room and quietly whispered the selection method and how I came to learn it.

"...I understand why you don't want to say it."

"So such a method existed, huh?"

"It certainly would be difficult for a man to say that to a woman."

"Wouldn't it be hard for women to say that to each other, too...?"

"Well, whatever happens, happens."

It was Hughes who stated that simply. He then turned around and shouted to the women, "Young Miss! My Lady! I know the method! You listen too, Araune!"

Wait, what was this person thinking?! Did he have a good way of telling them?

"Really?!"

"Yeah! Young Miss, wash your body! Then you lure the slimes to the dirty bathwater and feed it to them!"

He said it!! He just straight up said it!! Ah... There goes the fair palms of the ladies making contact with his face...

After the women had calmed down, Reinhart explained how the conclusion Hughes revealed had been reached. When given the option between clean water and dirty bathwater, normal slimes would go for the clean water. But for some reason, slimes that can evolve into cleaner slimes like to gather around bathwater...

Once they evolved into cleaner slimes, they stopped eating regular meals and lived off grime and water alone... That was why they loved grimy water the most, as it was a combination of the two.

"I never imagined there would be a slime of such a nature..."

"I'm sorry..."

"Ah, no, it's not your fault, Ryoma."

"Cleaner slimes... might be hard for a woman to capture..."

"Ryoma."

"Huh?"

"I still want a cleaner slime after all."

It seemed like Eliaria didn't want to give up on cleaner slimes.

"Then, one of your escorts..."

"That cannot do. I may be a trainee, but I'm going to become a tamer. I cannot rely on others to do things for me."

"...Doing everything alone... isn't always... a good thing..."

"Even so, I want to take the first step myself."

“...The decision is yours... My Lady...”

“I... I...! I’ll do it! Could I have some of your water?”

Everyone around me shed a tear at that declaration. Eliaria was fighting back a deep blush. There was no need for her to force herself... And what was with this atmosphere? It was like an important decision had been made, when in reality what she had to do was... you know...

But now that it’s come to this, I’d feel bad just bringing out water and calling it a day, so I offered her the bathtub. As a former Japanese person, there were times when I wanted to submerge myself in a bath, so I had made a proper bathtub. Though I had never imagined this would happen to it.

“There is, a bath... feel free to use it.”

“You have a bath? Thank you so much!”

I filled the tub with water magic, then boiled it with fire magic. Once the temperature was adjusted with more water magic, I informed the young lady it was ready. The preparation only took a few minutes — magic was truly convenient.

After Eliaria and her two maids went into the bathroom, I returned to the others, where Hughes was rubbing his cheek and groaning.

“Ow-ow-ow... Well, that wasn’t very nice.”

“You brought it on yourself.”

“That was a little too much...”

His words had certainly lacked delicacy. I was often told the same in my previous life, but even I could tell that was insensitive. In my old life, careless remarks could be taken as sexual harassment, after all. That’s why I had to take extra care. If I didn’t, I would have been socially ostracized.

“Ah, Ryoma. Welcome back.”

“Ma’am... I don’t know what to say...”

“It’s fine, she decided this for herself. It’s not like you lied about it, right?”

“Of course.”

“Then it’s fine. At any rate, I’m happy to see that child show an earnest interest in becoming a tamer. If she only wanted to obtain a cleaner slime, she could have negotiated with you to give her one instead.”

...

...

What... did you just... say?

“Excuse me?”

“That you could have given her one... Did the thought not cross your mind?”

Ha, hahaha... I wonder why such a simple thought hadn't occurred to me...? Now that I thought about it, wasn't that the simplest way of obtaining something? It never even crossed my mind... Maybe I've been isolated in the forest for too long?

"Goodness..."

"Ah, such youth. That was amusing. But I truly was glad about my daughter's attitude, you know?"

"I see..."

For some reason, I felt tired...

After all of that, the young lady got out of her bath and collected the water, taking it to the river in search of slimes while I had my clothing sized by the maids. She was lucky and managed to return successfully by the time I finished trying on all the clothes. Of course, she had her captured slime with her, and made her first contract under the watchful eye of me and ten others.

By then, it had already gotten rather late, so it was decided that they would all stay over at my place for the night. I offered them all my bathtub and got cooking. The two maids and Sebas the butler offered to help, but I refused. While I would have been grateful for help, my kitchen was rather cramped. There was no room for three adults and all the cooking utensils were a children's size, made for me. It would have been bad for their backs.

For the record, dinner was a ginger stir-fry imitation using wild animal meat and ground giger. Reinhart took a great liking to it, and it was received favorably by the others as well, but it was a little off to me, as a former Japanese person. However, the taste grew on me.

The only source of salt I had was what little rock salt was in the cliffs, but they contained minerals that had to be separated and refined through alchemy to prevent harm to the body. If I didn't have alchemy, I wouldn't have been able to live in this forest for three years. I had managed to secure a non-life threatening amount, but it wasn't satisfactory.

Well, for now, I was glad that they liked it.

Chapter 1 Episode 5: Inconsistent Logic

After dinner, we were chatting over tea when Elise said, “Ryoma, have you decided on what you want to do from here?”

“...I’m unsure, to be honest. Do I stay... or move elsewhere...”

My research had settled for now, my head finally cooling after seeing enough slimes to fill an entire room. Meeting people like this also left me wondering about certain things. Things like ingredients and seasonings for cooking.

...That’s why I figured it was about time to go and see the world. But what should I say? A child with an established background as an antisocial recluse wants to go and see the world! That would be too unnatural... All right, it was time to pull out the almighty excuse — the grandparents.

“...Grandparents told me... live happily in town... My current life... is content. But I started to think... grandparents... might not wish for me... to live here...”

“Ryoma...”

A solemn air fell upon the room when Reinbach closed his eyes and said, “Then... how about you leave the forest with us?”

“Huh?”

Huh, what was this person saying? Today was our first time meeting each other, no?

“Our family is a ducal house. Covering the living necessities of one person is no difficulty. Not to mention how it’d be a waste to have a talented tamer like you hidden away so deep in the forest like this. You may not like towns, but won’t you try leaving the forest a bit?”

...I had never expected to receive an invitation like that. The others around me were also giving me kind looks that said they agreed. Everyone was so kind, it made my heart hurt...

“We will be going to stay in a town called Gimul tomorrow, then return home in two months. It will be possible to return here, so would you like to join us for our journey?”

“Journey...”

Thinking about it carefully, I knew nothing about this world... Though the gods had given me basic knowledge, it wasn’t as though I had seen things with my own eyes. I hadn’t even known what the outside world thought about slimes. There may be many more

examples like that.

...These people seemed like nice people, and it'd be better than being alone, right? And if I didn't go now, I'd probably drag my feet for another 2-3 months without moving...

"That... would be nice. I will probably cause you trouble... but would you allow me... to join you?"

"Yes! So you're willing to come?"

"Because I myself... started thinking... about leaving the forest..."

"I see, I see. You'll have to prepare for the journey. Let's extend our departure to tomorrow afternoon. Do you think you can get ready in that time?"

"Until morning is fine. If I use Item Box... I can bring it all."

"Oh my, you can use Item Box at that young age? That's amazing."

Really? I had heard that many people could use Item Box, though?

"Grandma said... it was useful, so I learned it. I was told... many could use it."

"Oh, no no. Even if it's basic magic, it's a higher element magic, you know? While there are many people that can use Item Box, when you consider your age that's plenty impressive."

Not again... Was I missing information somewhere? Or was the information I had not adjusted for age? This meant I had to be careful not to mess up... But I was also quite lucky to come across people who could supplement my general knowledge like this.

"It seems like Master Ryoma has talents in areas other than magic too. You have a very exciting future ahead of you."

"That's true. If you have anything you want to study other than taming magic, let us know, okay? We'll teach you."

"Being able to study alongside Ryoma sounds fun."

"Thank you very much."

After wrapping things up with a word of thanks, Eliaria and her household staff offered to help me, so we started with cleaning the worst room first.

"Whoa, what is this room?"

"It's filled with weapons and armor."

"Just sorting through all this is going to be hard work..."

"Is that a pelt at the back?"

"What are these bags in the corner that look like trash?"

I had brought them to the room I was using for storage. It had everything I had gathered over the last 3 years, including the belongings of bandits and things.

I sometimes cleaned the weapons and armor so those were organized to a degree, but everything else was basically piled upon each other.

“Item Box... all of it. Everything... will be put away. The bags in the corner are bandit loot.”

“What’s inside?”

“Dunno...”

“You mean you haven’t checked? Defeating bandits without checking your spoils is like risking your life for nothing, you know?”

“I wasn’t really interested.”

I responded to Hughes’s words with a single phrase, but there were several reasons for that. Firstly, most bandits’ belongings were dirty and smelly, with nothing of particular value. At worst, there would be nothing other than rotten food and trash. Some of them had money, but that was worthless without going into town... In the end, the amount of effort wasn’t worth the gains, so at some point I stopped checking them properly and just threw them in here after the slimes were done cleaning.

“In that case, would it be better to examine the contents first?”

“True, it’d be better to just chuck it out if it’s just trash inside. How about we split up the separation and storage steps to get it done at the same time?”

I agreed to Araune and Jill’s suggestions, so Eliaria and the two maids were assigned the duty of separating the bandits’ belongings. If I was tasked with separating things, we wouldn’t be able to get both jobs done at once.

Thus, we started working on throwing everything I had into the black hole. From what I heard partway through, there was some surprisingly valuable equipment, and the pelts would sell for a pretty penny too. Even more unexpectedly, a bag containing a hefty 40 medium gold coins was discovered. From what I knew, that was a fairly large amount of money, which I was grateful for now that I was heading to the town.

However... Considering what happened with the slimes, the accuracy of my knowledge was a concern. I should probably have them teach me the value of things, just to be sure.

We continued to work while I pondered over such things, and once we were done I had the cleaner slimes and scavenger slimes finish off the rest. I then offered the now-clean room to the escorts of the ducal house to rest in.

“You sure? Do you have anything else you need help with?”

“No, the rest... can do alone. Just ingredients and medicines left.”

“Medicines... shouldn’t be meddled with by amateurs. All right, call us if you need anything else.”

“Thank you very much, Camil.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. We should be thanking you for the room. Having an enclosed room to rest in is more than we could hope for.”

After I gave them my thanks, everyone began to prepare to sleep. Now, all that was left were the basic items the three gods had given me when I first came to this world, as well as... That's right, could I bring my slimes along too? There was no way I could leave them. I should ask. They should still be awake at this time.

"Mister Reinhart, Lord Reinbach."

"What is it, Ryoma?"

"Can I... bring my slimes on the journey? There'll be... a total of 17 slimes."

"Of course. Nothing wrong with a tamer bringing his familiars."

"There's plenty of room in the carriage, we'll save some space for them."

Oh, that was a relief.

"Thank you very much."

When I said that, they smiled at me in reassurance. They really were wonderful people. If I were to give an example in Japan, it would be like asking someone who agreed to let me hitchhike if I could bring my 17 pets with me too... Yeah, I definitely wouldn't agree. One or two was one thing, but 17 was way too many. Not that I had a driver's license to begin with. I really couldn't be more grateful to the duke's family... Oh yes, I should give my greetings to them before I leave, too.

With that thought, I stood up and headed to the training room at the very back of my home. The room itself was nothing but an empty space, but the wall across from the entrance had statues of the gods carved into the rock. Idolatry was not forbidden in this world, and creating your own statues of the gods wasn't a crime either. It was even recommended in some areas, where the most devout worshipers would use a miniature statue bought from the church as a model to carve their own, little by little as they prayed every day.

I should seal the entrance with earth magic in case someone came along... There we go.

Sitting cross-legged before the statues, I meditated for a few minutes before opening my eyes and beginning to speak.

"Another day has passed safely. I'm sure you know this already, because you're gods, but I'll be going out for a while with the guests who visited today. Apparently our destination will be a town called Gimul... It's finally time for my first journey after coming to this world. Now I can go to a church and keep my promise. However, I don't know when I can come back again, so I'm taking all my things just in case. If I don't end up returning... I'll make more statues in my new place. See you later, then."

Once I was done, I stood up and unsealed the entrance to leave the training room.

It seemed like the only ones I couldn't talk to normally were other people... If I couldn't talk to the gods' statues, I would have noticed a lot earlier than I did. Maybe I was nervous? Well, whatever... Now that everything was ready, all that was left to do was wait for the morning and leave with my slimes. Time to sleep.

Thus, I crawled under the covers of my bed.

I wonder what the town's like...

My mind was so busy imagining the unseen towns, I found it a little harder to sleep than usual.

Chapter 1 Episode 6: Morning of Departure

The next day.

Hm?

When I woke up in the morning, I noticed something was different about my room. The only source of light in my room was the magic light beside my pillow. It was dimmed so that everything was dark, but I could immediately tell something was off.

There were no ‘things.’

Come to think of it, I packed everything yesterday... I accepted in my head once, before I took a second look and still found it strange. I poured energy into the magic stone to illuminate the room, and found it to be completely empty. While I had packed most of my items away into my Item Box yesterday, I had left the furniture, like the tables, chairs, and shelves.

I didn’t recall breaking them down either. Yet, I couldn’t see them anywhere. In fact, the bed I should have been sleeping on was gone too. What was going on? There’s no way it could have been stolen, right...? That was impossible. If a thief snuck in I would notice, and the slimes would make a fuss too. I let the duke’s party sleep over last night, but I couldn’t imagine them stealing anything.

In the first place, stone furniture made from earth magic couldn’t be worth anything, and what thief would assume there would be anything of value in a cave like this? There were various spoils from my battles, but they were stored away in my Item Box.

All that was left were the slimes...! The slimes! Where were the slimes?!

“Whoa!”

Unable to see the single cleaner slime I normally left in my room, I tried to leap up from my sleeping area when suddenly, my body was enveloped in a floating sensation, followed by an impact and dull pain.

“Wait, huh?”

When I sat my sore body up, my surroundings were dark again. I turned on the light, this time to see my usual room. It was rather bare after all the packing, but the table, chair and other furniture were all there. The impact to my body also seemed to be from falling out of bed...

“Geez, it was just a dream...”

Now that I had calmed down, I could see the lone cleaner slime hanging over the edge of the bed to peer down at me. I could confirm the other slimes were also within the cave still.

Honestly, don't scare me like that... is what I wanted to say, but in this situation I had no one to say it to. Speaking of which, how long was it until the sun rose? If I recall, yesterday...

“...There it is.”

The clock I received yesterday was still on the table. The clock face was a round and thin metal plate with numbers and two hands attached, set upon a round pedestal with a Y-shaped metal support. The pedestal, support, and clock face were all decorated in a modest but refined way, and with nothing mechanical in sight to suggest the structure of a clock, I had thought it was a mirror when I first unwrapped it. The back of the clock face was so polished, it really could have passed for a mirror.

The clock face itself had the numbers 1 to 12 positioned just like on Earth. One rotation was 12 hours, and two was 24 hours — a full day. And one hour was made of 60 minutes. In other words, it could be read in the same way as on Earth, which made things easy.

However, when I watched it carefully, it seemed like the length of one minute in this world was slightly different to one minute on Earth. Well, the length of a day in this world had never bothered me from the beginning, although that may be due to my relaxed schedule these past three years ruining my body clock...

Either way, when I checked the clock, it said it was currently 5:30. This clock couldn't tell morning and afternoon apart, but it was obviously morning. I would have overslept by a lot if it was afternoon. There was time for a second sleep if I wanted, but I didn't feel like it. As I was thinking that, I heard muffled footsteps from deeper within the house.

“Sebas...?”

“Good morning, Master Ryoma.”

I turned my eyes towards the direction of the sound to find the duke's butler, Sebas, walking this way.

“Is something the matter?”

“I heard a strange sound earlier, followed by light leaking into the corridor.”

It seemed like he had heard my great fall out of bed.

“Did I... wake you?”

“No, we servants are normally up and about at this hour. Araune and Lilian are awake too. Though the other still seem to be sleeping.”

“I see...”

The sun was about to rise, so I guess I'd go get water from the

river. There was no point waiting around idly, but it'd also be disruptive if I went about doing things.

When I told that to Sebas, he said he could create it with water magic, so I told him he could use the bathroom and kitchen as he wished before I left the house for some light training and a walk before we left.

“Phew.”

After stepping outside, the tranquil morning air of the forest brushed against my skin, filling my lungs with every breath. The chill was comforting as the sun started to rise from the distant sky. It was bright enough outside that no lights were needed to walk around. Stepping through the grass covered in morning dew, I strolled down the familiar path leisurely. Who knew how many times I had made my way back and forth to the river down this path... As I was immersed in my thoughts, I suddenly realized something.

The room in that dream had been from when I first came to this world. There were some parts I couldn't remember clearly, but there were no drawings on the wall or the corridor that led further inside in my dream. When I first arrived, I repeatedly went from digging my house, to securing food, to fetching water... now I remembered. It was right around the time of that dream where my continuous digging had finally created enough space for me to live in. That was when — that's right, it was here.

Before my eyes, the river I always fetched water from flowed by as usual. Its depth went from my ankles to my knees in the deep areas. While it wasn't very deep, its great width made the calming sound of flowing water constant.

“Rock.”

I made a water jug with earth magic.

Since becoming more familiar with water magic, the number of days I made do with magic increased, but in the beginning I came here to fetch water every day. I also washed my body, did the laundry, and trained by the riverside, so I spent most of my time either at home or here. On the morning when my home was done, I had also come here to fetch water... and picked up a slime that had been washed down the river. It wasn't the first time I had seen a slime letting itself be carried by the flow of the river, but on that day it had been close enough for me to reach. That's why I scooped it up in my water jug, then brought it home and tamed it on a whim.

The foundation of taming magic, the Taming Contract was formed by spinning magic energy into a thread and using it to connect the tamer and the monster. Once the contract had been formed, a certain level of mutual understanding would be achieved, allowing for orders to be followed and a sense of location to be gained. However, the first

time I formed a contract, the indistinct emotion I could feel from the slime could only be described as 'fear.' Watching the slime tremble made me decide to name it 'Tabuchi.' Because my first impression of it was very similar to the first time I met my former subordinate of that name.

The slime Tabuchi was slow at moving at first, weakened by flowing down the river. Even if I reached my hand out, it would just shake without trying to flee. When I tried to feed it live green caterpillars, two of every five would outrun it and escape. When it approached the river to drink, it would get washed away by the water... On that day, I finally understood the reason why slimes came floating down the river.

After that, I fed it and trained it. Once it evolved, I repeatedly conducted experiments until arriving at today. It sure brought back memories... Tabuchi was no longer here, unfortunately, but I still had his core.

...Speaking of the good ol' days, I wonder what the human Tabuchi was doing now? He had been a rather chubby man, an otaku who entered the company after me as a new graduate. From the moment I met him as his more experienced instructor, he trembled at the sight of my previous life's physique. He was pretty bad at socializing too, though I wasn't one to talk. But he was never late, and if I explained what he needed to do and how to do it then he would. If he messed up, he felt remorse, though whether he could express that well or not was a different matter.

As two people with the same otaku hobbies, we had lots to talk about, even though we were from different generations. He had difficulties being a team player, but he had fixed that before I died. His work was more than satisfactory, so I hoped he was able to quit that company and find employment elsewhere already... Looking back on it now, he had been quite a handful to deal with, but he was one of the good subordinates that I had. I wouldn't have named a slime after him otherwise, after all. Remembering the other good-for-nothing bosses and subordinates wasn't exactly pleasant.

Although now the numbers of slimes had increased so much, I no longer named them. I could still single out an individual if needed. The effects of the contract were very convenient.

"Oops, what time is it?"

That was a long trip down memory lane. Light was reflecting off the water surface into my eyes, and my surroundings were much brighter now too. The training I was going to do... No, I had plans. It would be better to return. I filled the water jug I had abandoned after creating and lifted it on my shoulder to carry back.

When I returned, Jill and Zeph were standing before the house,

looking rather surprised at the sight of me carrying a water jug taller than myself. I greeted them then went inside to find the time was 7. Quite some time had passed after all... Oops.

“You’re back, Ryoma. Good morning.”

Reinhart came out of the inner room.

“Good morning.”

“Are you all prepared?”

“Not a... problem.”

“That’s good to hear.”

After that, I was invited to breakfast, so I fed the slimes their food while waiting. Once it was time for breakfast, I ate together with the ducal house, then gathered my slimes and went outside. After sealing the entrance with earth magic... Everything was all locked up.

Now... It was time for a new journey!

I wrapped up my fond memories of the last three years and turned back. The 11 people who would accompany me on my journey were waiting.

“Ready?”

“Yes, let’s go.”

“Then let’s get going.”

“All right! Off we go! Young Miss, Ryoma. If you need anything, just speak up!”

Hughes took the lead with everyone walking behind, as I took my first step towards something new.

Chapter 1 Episode 7: Rocked by the Carriage

Two hours of walking through the forest later...

The spaces between the trees gradually widened until a grassland with an open dirt path came into view. As we proceeded, a squad of people dressed in the same armor as the four escorts also came into view. The people saluted us with their hands over their chests as soon as they noticed us, pausing in their work to call out to each other. They must be people related to the ducal house.

“Who are they?”

“They’re private soldiers of our family. By periodically patrolling our domain, they keep the roads safe and peaceful.”

“They’ve come along as our escorts and were tasked with investigating the forest yesterday.”

Investigating?

“Did you know that the number of monster sightings and damage reports have increased in these last few years, Ryoma?”

“...? No, that’s the first I’ve heard.”

“I see. It comes and goes in waves, but in recent years it’s been trending upwards. By increasing the frequency of patrols, we’re hoping to improve safety. This area has never had many sightings, but after learning about you the other day...”

Learning about me?

“The fact that you live here. Also, last time we came, you brought Hughes a blanket made of a black bear pelt, right? That’s the strongest creature in this forest. Which is why we started wondering if it was possible that you were culling the increased number of monsters without our awareness. Just to be sure, I had them investigate the forest around the roads yesterday.”

Huh, so something like that had been happening... Wait, was that why they had gifted me so many presents yesterday?

Just as I was about to ask Reinhart that, a man with slightly fancier armor than the others broke off from the squad and stepped forth. Reinhart then parted ways with us, accompanied by Sebas. He was going to listen to their report.

Those of us remaining waited a short distance away to avoid bothering the squad, which was when I spotted Sebas in the distance, taking a horse carriage out with his space magic. I had heard they had

a carriage, but I didn't realize it was also being stored with space magic. I didn't even know that was possible.

When I saw Sebas himself walk into the hole made by the space magic, I realized that was probably the intermediate space magic Dimension Home. It was the upgraded version of the Item Box that came with a drastic increase in storage space. Apparently, you could even live inside it if you wanted. That was what the gods had told me, but this was my first time seeing it. As I was thinking such things, Sebas took carriage after carriage out. Just how much could that magic hold? Eliaria giggled triumphantly when she saw me gawking in surprise.

"Those are the carriages we'll be riding in. Sebas's Dimension Home can fit much more than that — all of our belongings are in there too, you know?"

*It could still fit more?! ...*Is what I retorted in my head, before Elise took my hand and led me into the same carriage as the four members of the family. The carriage could hold six people, and with me there it made five. After waiting a bit, Sebas came to join us. For the record, the slimes were on the luggage rack attached to the roof of the carriage. Normally, that space was used to place luxury items like alcohol and snacks to enjoy during the ride.

Once I had checked all the slimes were okay up there, we waited around for the overall preparations to wrap up and the signal for the carriages to move. Since we were riding in the same carriage, I mustered up my courage to ask Sebas about the magic he had used earlier. Apparently, he was one of the leading magicians in space magic in the kingdom, specializing in space and water magic. He said he could use advanced space magic, so I asked him another thing I was curious about.

"The advanced space magic, Another World... Can you use that?"

Sebas gave me an impressed look when I asked that.

"Oh, how do you know about that magic?"

"Familiars... easily scare townspeople. Instead of summoning magic, maybe space magic could be used... I asked grandma, and she told me."

"Can you use space magic instead of summoning and banishing, Sebas?"

"It is possible. Familiars can live inside a Dimension Home, as well as Another World. If familiars were placed within them, one can probably avoid causing unnecessary distress to the public."

Thank goodness. If it hadn't been possible, my future would have been a bit more problematic.

In this world, there was a magic very similar to the taming magic contract I had with my slimes, called summoning magic. Like taming

magic, it was a type of magic that contracted a monster to obey you, but as it only called the monster to you when needed, it was seen as far more convenient. Because of that, summoning magic was starting to replace taming magic as the mainstream choice... Well, I didn't really care about that.

I figured that the benefits of summoning magic could be substituted with space magic, so I chose taming magic as a skill while being reincarnated. Though part of the reason was also because I was told to choose an extra type of magic on top of taming, due to capacity issues.

"Public response varies from place to place, but many tamers often end up feeling ashamed..."

"But there is another problem with that. First, substituting summoning and banishing requires intermediate space magic or above. And any monsters placed inside a Dimension Home can only be removed by the space magician that put them in there. Whether the tamer uses the space magic themselves or hires someone else, if for some reason that space magician is no longer able to use space magic — especially in the case of death — the familiar will never be able to be brought out again. This applies to everything stored across all space magics, regardless of the difficulty, so it all depends on what the individual thinks. Some may choose to use it, while others consider the risks too great to use."

...Come to think of it, the three gods also discussed this among themselves when we came across this point.

"As for the answer to Master Ryoma's question, I can use Another World. However, it is not a spell that I favor. It is the highest difficulty of space magic, and those who can use it are well respected as elite space magicians... but that is all."

"What... do you mean?"

"It's a very impractical magic to use. To explain it in order... There are three steps needed to use Another World, and the first step is to create an immense space with magic. This step decides the size within Another World, and the size depends on the amount of magical energy the individual has."

"...So people with more magic... have bigger size... less magic... smaller size?"

"Precisely. On top of that, this first step uses all the magic of the individual and causes great exhaustion, sometimes leaving them bedridden for several days. And if they fail at the first step, the space is lost and requires starting over from the beginning."

So it would all be for nothing, huh...

"After succeeding at the first step, the second step is to connect the created space with your current position using a portal. This also

consumes a large amount of magic, and requires starting over if it fails. These two steps are the preparation, the third step is to just open the gate and go through it. In other words: on average, opening and closing this gate just once would consume anywhere from 5,000 to 10,000 magic energy. This 10,000 is a value applied to magic energy, but if you consider the fact that the minimum requirement to become a royal sorcerer is 10,000 magic energy... Even the best magicians of the kingdom could be rendered immobile with just one use of this magic. It is not a magic to be abused. In addition, the question of what should be placed in such a space after all that effort also makes it impractical.”

At that point, Eliaria spoke up.

“What do you mean? The bigger it is, the more things you can put in it, no?”

“You can, but if you’re only storing furniture and belongings for a trip, the intermediate Dimension Home is more than enough. If you want to store something that can only fit in Another World, then you’d be trying to store something as big as a palace or fortress. At that point, the next problem would be how to move such a thing, ultimately making it a waste of magic with no use.”

“I didn’t think of that.”

So there were quite a few downsides to it. Well, I was aware of most of that already, so it seemed reasonable to just aim for the intermediate Dimension Home for now. My familiars were slimes, anyway.

As I was thinking such things, Sebas made a follow-up comment.

“However, some large monsters can reach the size of a castle, so it could be of use if you ever contract a monster of that type.”

“Is that so... Thank you very much.”

“Not at all. Please feel free to ask as many questions as you wish.”

“Speaking of which, what elements of magic can you use, Ryoma? You’ve mentioned earth and space, and since you boiled the water for the bathtub, I assume fire and water too?”

My magic elements were a safe topic to talk about, so I answered Eliaria honestly.

“My grandma... said... all of them.”

“All the elements, huh? That’s uncommon. Are there any that you’re focusing on expanding?”

“Mostly earth and space... some fire and water... pretty much all, but just enough for living.”

“Hmm... And you can use taming magic and barrier magic on top of that? Be careful you don’t end up a jack of all elements, master of none.”

“I understand.”

Come to think of it, the gods gave me that warning too.

“...Did I say something funny?”

“Huh?”

“You were smiling a bit, Ryoma.”

Oops, I guess it was showing on my face.

“My grandma... once said the same... because I also dabbled... in healing magic and alchemy.”

“I see, I was worried I said something strange.”

“But alchemy? Now that’s another curious thing to have an interest in...”

Come to think of it, I hadn’t received much information about alchemy for some reason. I should ask about it.

“Is it rare?”

“You’d be hard pressed to find an alchemist nowadays. Their numbers have fallen dramatically after the rampant scams about creating gold. A long time ago there was a man called the Alchemy King who made a large profit, but he was the only successful case I’ve ever heard of.”

“According to some, the foundations of alchemy were created by the Alchemy King, but modern day alchemy was created by those who sought the profits of the Alchemy King. The current methods are far inferior to the techniques of the Alchemy King, so nowadays it’s just treated as a method of fraud, leaving alchemists in a precarious situation.”

“Alchemists also have this secretive and creepy image about them. Other magic-related guilds have a degree of secrecy, but alchemists take it one step too far.”

Reinbach, Sebas, and Eliaria’s description seemed pretty negative. But there were similarities to how supposed alchemists used to be treated on Earth, too.

“Would it be better... not to say... I learned alchemy?”

“Yes, that would be for the best.”

“I understand.”

After I replied, Eliaria asked me a question.

“Ryoma, what do alchemists actually do?”

How was I to answer this...?

“I don’t know other alchemists... so I’m not sure. All I can do... is purify rock salt.”

“Rock salt? The rock salt harvestable in that area has poison, so it’s worthless. What can you do with that?”

“The rock salt... contains many minerals... poisonous when consumed. But if you separate... minerals from rock salt... you can eat it. All I did... was remove minerals... making it edible.”

“You can do such a thing?!”

“Yes. The meal when you stayed over... The salt in that was... all harvested from the cliff’s rock salt.”

Reinhart started to grow excited at that, but immediately calmed down.

“That’s amazing! If that’s possible, then you could sell that salt as a product... Ah, no, nevermind. The rock salt in that area has been infamous for several years as being inedible. No one would think of buying it.”

“Really?”

“There was this one adventurer who wandered deep into the forest and harvested the rock salt, then sold it under the name of a different production area. With the exception of certain regions, hunters and gatherers are permitted to harvest freely, so greedy nobles would try to monopolize the rock salt deposits in their domain. The adventurer probably wanted to avoid that, so they lied about the production area to keep all the profits for themselves. Thus, the rock salt was sold widely to a great number of people who then fell sick, and that adventurer was executed. It caused a huge uproar, so now the entire kingdom knows that you can’t eat the rock salt from the Jamil domain’s Forest of Gana. Luckily, we never dealt in rock salt to begin with, so it didn’t affect our trade...”

So people lied about production in other worlds, too...

“That cliff... only had a little rock salt to harvest... Not enough to meet demand. If you take to market... will lose to areas that can produce lots of safe salt. But should be enough... for the House of Jamil and nearby villages... to harvest and use.”

“I see, that’s a shame.”

Just by discussing trifling matters, I was gaining more and more information. The carriage rocked me comfortably as I lent an ear to the relaxed chatter flowing around me.

Chapter 1 Episode 8: The First Town

The carriage proceeded with the occasional breaks, until it was time for the sun to set.

Ten coins were lined up before me.

They were grouped into: three bronze coins, three silver coins, and three gold coins, which I held in my two hands.

Each group within was split into small, medium, and large coins, with the small being the equivalent of a Japanese 5 yen coin, medium 100 yen, and large 500 yen.

On top of that, Elise had a white metallic coin the size of a 1 yen coin in her hand.

“We’re missing the last two coins, but what you have there are bronze, silver, and gold coins. I have here a platinum coin. These four types of coins each have a small, medium, and large size. This total of twelve coins make up the currency used in this kingdom. Their value starts the small bronze coin, where one coin is 1 sute. A medium bronze coin is ten times that much, 10 sutes. Large bronze coins are another ten times that, making them 100 sutes. Silver coins are a little different, as the small silver coin are five times that much, at 500 sutes; while the medium silver coin is two times that, at 1,000 sutes. It continues in a pattern of five times, two times, all the way up to large gold coins. Then the platinum coins go up in factors of ten again.”

In other words, it was like this:

Small Bronze Coin	— 1
Medium Bronze Coin	— 10
Large Bronze Coin	— 100
Small Silver Coin	— 500
Medium Silver Coin	— 1,000
Large Silver Coin	— 5,000
Small Gold Coin	— 10,000
Medium Gold Coin	— 50,000
Large Gold Coin	— 100,000
Small Platinum Coin	— 1,000,000
Medium Platinum Coin	— 10,000,000
Large Platinum Coin	— 100,000,000

“The cost of living for a regular citizen starts at 100 sutes, so the

most commonly used are the bronze coins. Silver coins are used by small stores and for savings, while gold coins are mostly used by large stores and nobility. The platinum coin in My Lady's hand is not commonly used by nobles, and is mostly used when making large purchases or negotiating between kingdoms."

Good, there was no discrepancy between the value of the coins and what I knew already. While I was comparing my knowledge with what they had told me, the man driving the carriage called out to us.

"Everyone, the town of Keleban has come into view. We will be arriving soon."

We must have arrived at the stopover town. I actually thought we were going to be camping today... Wait, hold on. I had no proof of identity on me, was that okay?

"Umm..."

"Is something the matter?"

"Proof of identity... I... don't have one... is that...?"

Calm down, me! I had been getting so much better compared to two weeks ago! The second I panicked, my speech became all broken again...

"Don't worry. Those without an ID will be issued a temporary one. It's a simple examination, so it won't be a problem."

Oh, thank goodness. But I really wanted to do something... about this speech of mine.

As I thought about such things, I found myself sighing unconsciously, which Elise noticed.

"Are you okay? There's no need to be worried, we'll protect you no matter what. The town isn't scary at all, okay?"

"Ah..."

She seemed to have misunderstood something. I should clear that up.

"That wasn't... just now... It wasn't... about the town."

"Really? Then what's wrong?"

"It's... my words. They're strange, right? The way... I talk... right now."

"...Hmm..."

"For three years... I didn't speak. Then two weeks ago... when Mister Reinhart came... I couldn't form my words. Even I was surprised... So for two weeks, I kept talking to my slimes... to get a little better... But it's still weird... It just won— hrgh!"

What?! M-Ma'am?! She suddenly hugged me.

"It'll be okay, Ryoma! Let's take it slowly, step by step. You aren't alone anymore... sniff."



She was crying?! ...Now that I looked around, not only Elise, but Eliaria and all the men had watery eyes too?! Why... Well, I suppose objectively I sounded like a very lonely person.

Spending three years without talking to anyone, until I couldn't form my own words and had to practice talking to slimes...

"It's fine! I was the one... who decided... to live in the forest."

Everyone was a little gloomy for a while after that. My insistence that it was all right seemed to have no effect as Elise hugged me all the way to the gate.

Sebas and Reinhart stepped out on our behalf at the gate, and after a short exchange with the gatekeeper, were led to the office, along with the rest of us. I was the only one actually called, but Elise was worried and came along. However... now the gatekeeper and supervisor were stiff with fear over my identification.

I'm sorry you were involved because of me, people who I don't know...

"N... N-N-Now then, p-p-please place your hand against th-th-this crystal."

Not only did he stutter all over the place, his voice cracked too. Well, I wasn't one to pick at other people's speech.

"Yes, sir."

The moment I obediently placed my hand against the crystal, it lit up with a blue light. At the same time, the gatekeeper's eyes flickered between me and the crystal in utter shock.

"Y-You, boy, come with me for a moment."

Was something wrong? A blue light should have meant an innocent verdict... Which was when Sebas and Elise stepped in.

"Is there a problem?"

"The light was blue. That should mean he isn't guilty of anything, no?"

"Y-Y-Yes, it was blue! But, a reward! He has a record of defeating a bandit with a bounty, so I need to confirm that and pay out the reward!"

The two adults accepted that. But it was decided that the confirmation and payout would take place where they could see me.

"Th-Then I must ask you, boy, were you the one who defeated the bandit?"

"Yes, sir."

"The information on the crystal says that you defeated Melzen of the Red Lance, is this true?"

Umm, I wouldn't know. Who was that, even?

"I don't know... who... that is."

"If I told you it was a man with a crimson lance and similarly red armor, would that ring any bells?"

One man came to mind at those words. I believed the lance was a good item, so I had shut it in my Item Box immediately.

“It does. I have the lance... Would that be proof?”

“If you have it, I’d like to see it.”

After he said that, I took the lance out of my Item Box and handed it over. The supervisor who took the lance looked all over it... then poured magic energy into the lance, upon which the speartip burst into red flames.

What?! So the lance had such a function to it... Could I do it too? I should give it a go next time.

“There’s no mistaking it. A red lance, a magical weapon that releases flames. This belonged to Melzen of the Red Lance. Your reward shall be prepared immediately.”

The man gave an order to the soldier who led us here, and the soldier ran off in a hurry. While I was watching the soldier leave, the man called out to me.

“But wow... That Melzen, defeated, huh? That man had escaped the grasp of so many adventurers and knights, he was definitely skilled. If it isn’t too intrusive, may I ask how you defeated him?”

Even if you say that... I didn’t do anything in particular...

“An injured bandit attacked me... and was mumbling about... a partner that betrayed him... before dying. I couldn’t rest easy with someone like that... nearby... so I searched... and found him drinking in a cave.”

“And you attacked him there?”

“No. I’m a tamer. I sent a poison slime... to his wine barrel.”

“Ah, I see. So that’s how you defeated him. I got it. Thanks for telling me.”

Just then, the soldier from earlier returned with the reward, which I accepted with my temporary ID before leaving the office. The escorts had been ordered to head to the lodgings first, so they weren’t outside when I left. Apparently we were going to walk around the town to let Eliaria sight-see for a bit.

For the record, the reward for Melzen was 700 small gold coins. It was quite a hefty weight to throw into my Item Box, making me suddenly rich.

What to do...

Because of my lifestyle for the last three years, I had no idea how to use it. For now, I should thank everyone who came along with me.

“Thank you very much, everyone.”

“It’s fine, no need to be humble.”

“But to think you were the one who finished off that Melzen...

Hmm...”

“What’s more important is the town right now!”

“Elia, calm yourself.”

“But this is my first time seeing a town so big!”

“Oh, really?”

“Yes. Like I said yesterday, this is my first extended trip. There’s nowhere I can walk like this near me, and most importantly — this town is the largest trading city in the Jamil domain, you know? You won’t find many places with more people than this!”

“I see...”

While there were many people around, it didn’t feel like a lot, having experienced Tokyo. This was practically nothing compared to a metro station or fully packed train.

...Come to think of it, I didn’t feel particularly moved by my first town in another world. While the old-fashioned buildings were a curious sight, they weren’t anything to make a particular fuss over, and I couldn’t see any other species of people like beastmen or elves...

Wait, the young lady was in too much of a rush. She was being whisked away by the flow of people. It was obvious she wasn’t used to walking through these kinds of towns. Since it was dangerous, I hurried to catch up to her.

“This way, Miss.”

“Th-Thank you very much. There are so many people, I nearly bumped into them.”

Every time she spotted something interesting, Eliaria would stop and gawk. Since she was displaying her naivety for the world to see, she had caught the eye of some ruffians. One woman was walking towards her from behind, on course to bump into her, so I pulled Eliaria out of her way.

“Watch out.”

“Grr... Tch.”

When the woman was prevented from bumping into the young lady, she glanced at me and clicked her tongue in irritation. She must have been a pickpocket after all.

“Thank you very much. Oh? What is that?”

Not again... This time it was someone in an alley we were about to walk past. I caught her just before she stepped before the alley and pulled her towards me.

“Look before walking.”

“Huh?!”

“Whoa!”

Because I had pulled her towards me, the man messed up his timing and tripped on his way out of the alley.

“People will walk... out of alleys. Be careful.”

“Th-Thank you very much...”

After giving Eliaria a word of advice, I approached the man.

“Are you okay...? You’re not hurt, right...?”

“The hell do you want, brat...?!”

The man I had called out to tried to grab me by my collar, but I subtly deflected that incoming hand upwards and grabbed it with my right hand. At the same time, I reached my left hand under his elbow and used my body to block Eliaria from seeing me twist his arm and topple his balance. The man had stopped talking when he realized he was about to roll, but I supported him just before that and met his eyes once more.

“I said, you’re not hurt, right?”

“Y-Yeah... Sorry about that, thanks for the hand up...”

“Take care, now.”

When I let go, the man rubbed at his arm through his clothes and departed promptly. Honestly, just because you messed up doesn’t mean you can pick fights with kids... though I was an old geezer on the inside. I wasn’t even sure whether I was a child or an old man myself these days.

“Ryoma! Let’s go over there too!”

Again?! And the criminals were following too, damn it!

After that, I spent some time going through great pains keeping the young miss safe from pickpockets, extortionists, kidnappers, and thugs with all kinds of intent. Even though the members of the ducal house were ready to handle things at a moment’s notice, they chose to leave things to me for some reason.

Really, wasn’t this town’s safety kind of terrible...?

Chapter 1 Episode 9: In a Town Inn

??? Side

The bodyguard duty over Eliaria that Ryoma had taken on continued until Sebas called her back to the inn. Now, they were back at the inn's lobby and confirming their booking.

"Ow-ow-ow..."

"Are you okay, My Lady?"

"Yes, my feet are just a little tired. Also, from the carriage... Were you all right with it, Ryoma?"

"It wasn't a problem."

The fatigue of the journey and a little pain down his backside from the rocking carriage was nothing to Ryoma. When Eliaria realized those were his true feelings, her shoulders slumped a little from comparing herself with the same-aged Ryoma. One of the maids noticed that and immediately called out to her.

"That's normal for a first journey, My Lady."

"Araune."

"You will grow used to it as you ride in carriages more. Master Ryoma seemed fine with it, but was this your first experience riding a carriage?"

"This was... the first."

"Oh, really? You seemed unaffected, so I assumed you had ridden one before."

"I haven't... but I've run alongside them, and pulled them before."

He had ran parallel to man-powered rickshaws as part of his daily training during his school days, and outran them several times. Eventually he ended up scouted by the rickshaw owner, and out of nostalgia for his rickshaw-pulling job, those were the words that fell out of his mouth. However, Eliaria and Araune mistook the words as Ryoma being forced to pull the carriages in place of horses. The conversation came to a halt at the sudden misunderstanding, the air growing heavy.

...What? Did I say something weird...?

Speaking too much about his past had a high chance of creating holes in his story. That was why Ryoma was meant to make others think he had a past that was hard to intrusively question, but his utterance this time had been accidental, so Ryoma himself wasn't aware that his words had caused the sudden pained look on Araune

and Eliaria's face.

He tried to bring up a new topic in his confusion.

"Umm... have you never... gone out before, My Lady? You didn't... seem familiar with the carriage... so I'm curious."

"Oh, no, I have gone out before, but until now, whenever we had business in other towns I would ride the familiars of my mother or grandfather. I would ride carriages in the towns, but only for short durations."

"I see."

But there was no way a man who had been terrible at socializing for over 40 years would suddenly possess the conversational ability to break out of the situation so easily, and the conversation trailed off into silence.

The one who eventually broke the silence was Reinhart, who returned from discussing tomorrow's plans with the escorts.

"Good work today, everyone. Elia, we won't be camping tonight, so get some proper rest."

"Yes, Father."

"As for Ryoma, I wasn't able to get a room like ours for you. I'm sorry, but you'll be staying in one of the servant rooms for the inn guests."

"That will be enough."

"It's a big room, but Sebas is going through the procedures to put you in the same room as Zeph and the others. I'm sure you'll feel more at ease with familiar faces around."

"I am very grateful."

After Ryoma gave his thanks, he went with Sebas while Eliaria went with her parents to their respective rooms.



In the ducal house's room.

The four people of the House of Jamil were relaxing in the room, when Reinhart suddenly asked Eliaria a question.

"Elia, what were you talking to Ryoma about in the lobby earlier? The air was kind of tense."

Eliaria flinched at those words.

"Th-The truth is, I touched upon Ryoma's past a little..."

"Really?"

"Yes. Ryoma seemed fine in the carriage, so I thought he was used to riding them... but... today was his first time riding in a carriage. He said he hadn't ridden them before, but he used to run alongside or pull them himself..."

"I see... but he didn't seem too bothered about it himself. He was acting normally after that too. So you don't need to worry too much

about it either, Elia.”

“Just be at ease, dear. You dragged him everywhere before we came to the inn, no? Keep being that way around him.”

Eliaria blushed when that was pointed out.

“That was... L-Looking back on it now, I’m embarrassed... I was too excited.”

“I agree, it was a little improper.”

“E-Eep...”

“Hoho, being energetic is a good thing. Elia is still a child, so it’s a point of charm. However, you mustn’t grow careless. Acting like that is just asking for thugs to target you, you realize? You must take care of yourself.”

“Yes...”

“Now, go take a bath and sleep for today, we’ll be on the move tomorrow too. And camping again, got it?”

“I understand. Have a good night, Mother, Father, Grandfather.”

Eliaria said, leaving the room to take a bath. Once she was out of sight, the adults changed the topic.

“Phew... so, what do you think of Ryoma?”

“I told Elia not to worry about it, but honestly there’s lots to worry about.”

“But he seems like a good child. Anyway, if he was planning something up his sleeve, I believe he would have acted more like a normal child to avoid suspicion.”

“I have no objections to that. However, just what kind of life has he gone through to turn out like that? He said he took care of bandits with poison slimes, but that wasn’t all of his abilities. He has a considerable amount of strength himself, casually protecting Elia while being dragged around in circles.”

“While the only ones who attempted anything were amateurs who didn’t notice us, it was a wonderful show of skills. It made our job much easier.”

“That’s right.”

Reinbach looked at his right hand, where a small snake was peeking out of his sleeve. The snake slithered along his palm and poked its head out between his index and middle fingers, which Reinbach petted with his thumb comfortingly. While it would seem cute to some people, it was a B-rank monster called the assassin snake. Its combat ability wasn’t that high, but its compact size and swift movement, combined with its high wariness, made it difficult to find and defeat. Reinbach used this wariness to keep an eye on the thugs that approached his granddaughter. Even if Ryoma hadn’t done anything, Eliaria wouldn’t have been exposed to any real danger.

“If he’s that skilled at that age, then he must be...”

“There’s no need to be concerned over that right now. As long as one’s alive, there’s nothing wrong with being strong. We just have to watch over him.”

“That’s true. However, his reaction to the town hasn’t been favorable, as expected.”

“Yeah. I won’t say he has to go as far as Elia, but a child should normally be a little more excited.”

“He didn’t even blink at the size of the town or the number of people, it was like he was looking at a pebble on the road.”

Reinbach’s opinion wasn’t wrong in a sense. However, his interpretation was greatly different to Ryoma’s. While Ryoma had been looking at the crowds like he was looking at pebbles, that was because he had lived in a place as populated as Tokyo, spending his days within such crowds. Since he had seen far bigger crowds on a daily basis, he was wholly unsurprised by the crowds of this town, and was indifferent to the sights on offer. That was why he had looked at everything flatly, but for these three who were unaware of his situation, it looked as though his eyes were devoid of life.

“It doesn’t feel right to see youth with their whole future ahead of them with that sort of look in their eyes...”

On that day, more misunderstandings grew about Ryoma while he wasn’t present.



Meanwhile, in the room allocated to the servants.

Sebas brought Ryoma to the room where he would be staying the night.

“Excuse me.”

“Pardon the intrusion.”

They entered the room with their greetings to see Jill, Zeph, Camil, and Hughes inside already. It was a wide but simple room, with six beds and small tables lined next to each other.

“Yo, you’re here!”

“Welcome.”

“It’s only for one night, but let’s get along.”

“The bed in the corner is free.”

“Thank you, I will be in your care.”

After exchanging greetings, the five other occupants in the room started chatting by asking Ryoma questions.

“Come to think of it, what do you normally do?”

“Huh?”

“We live in town, so we can go out eating and drinking at night, but you were in the forest, right?”

“Oh... Normally, I research slimes... and practice magic. Also, I

work out.”

“...Is that all?”

“Yes.”

“Doesn’t it get boring?”

“Magic and slime research... is fun.”

“If you find research fun, you might have the disposition to be a researcher.”

“That would definitely be impossible for me.”

“Come to think of it, Master Ryoma occasionally uses some advanced vocabulary and polite language. Did you study anywhere before?”

“I learned from my grandmother. She said having knowledge and manners... was important to get by.”

“Master Ryoma’s grandmother sounds like a wonderful person.”

“She was a person who could do everything, other than fighting with a weapon.”

“Oh? Then what kind of person was your grandfather?”

“Opposite of my grandmother... He could only make weapons and fight. But he was very good at handling weapons. The weapons he made... were also top class. I was no match against his fighting... nor his blacksmithing.”

“Huh, you’re a blacksmith too?”

“I helped... so I know the basics. But I didn’t learn properly... and haven’t touched on it in over three years. I can only smith dull rejects.”

“You certainly wouldn’t be able to get any proper tools or materials in that forest.”

“Now that you’re out of the forest, you can just buy the things you need. More importantly, though, is there anything you want to do? If it’s before dinner, you could even go for a walk.”

That was when Ryoma said, “Then, can I ask where... is the church?”

“Church? Sorry, but the church is closed at this hour.”

“The church in this town shuts its gates before it gets dark, so it closes early. By the way, there are two churches in this town — which one do you worship, Creationism or Divinity?”

“Creationism.”

“In that case, the church is unfortunately closed for today. If it were the Church of Divinity, then they would open the gates for a considerable donation...”

“Really?”

“While the scale of Divinity is large, there are many corrupt priests who would do anything, depending on the donation.”

“Even among the worshipers, there are many that believe in the

gods but don't trust the priests. They say that those with their eyes on money head towards Divinity, which leaves Creationism with the devout priests instead."

"They worship the same gods, and there isn't much difference in the doctrines. Most people decide on their church based on the size or the personalities of the believers."

"I didn't know that... thank you very much."

"It was nothing. But you must be pretty devout yourself, naming the church as the first place you want to go."

"Really?"

"...I am also a follower of Creationism, but I only visit the church once a month, if at all. I barely worship while traveling."

"Did you go to church often before you lived in the forest?"

"Ever since birth... I have never... gone. I just prayed... to the stone statue at home. I also had a stone statue made from earth magic in my forest home."

"Then how about we buy some stone materials for you to make a statue? This is a high-class inn, so they should have the materials for carving statues of the gods."

Sebas said, so Ryoma bought three large blocks from the inn. However, the stone materials sold there were of rather high quality, so the three blocks cost one small gold coin, a surprisingly high cost. Despite that, Ryoma bought it and returned to the room to use his earth magic.

This time, the elaborate details on the completed statues had Camil making a fuss, while Sebas praised his work as good enough to make a living on. The details on the stone statues were simply due to the fact that Ryoma had actually met the gods in person, so he had a firm image of them in his mind. Thanks to his magic control skill, he had been able to control his earth magic precisely. And finally, thanks to his hobby of making figurines in his previous life, he was used to creating items like this.

Starting with Hughes, the detailed reasons didn't matter. He enjoyed the peaceful time, smiling at having the statue before him being praised. He completed the three statues in that soft atmosphere, and by the time he finished praying it was time for dinner.

Ryoma enjoyed another peaceful and fun time having his meal, then went to bed early in preparation for the new day.

Chapter 1 Episode 10: Accident

The next day.

In the end, we never went to the church in Keleban Town. There was a church in the town of Gimul where we were heading, so I'd just go there. Until then, I'd just pray to the stone statues I sculpted yesterday.

Thus, we'd enjoy our relaxing carriage trip until then — or so I thought...

"It's a little cold..."

"Because of the rain, I suppose."

"It's a bit strange for rain to come pouring down so hard in this season, though."

"Looks like we were unlucky, Elia."

Several hours after we left town, we were hit by a downpour that was apparently out of season. The road was extremely muddy and caused the carriage to shake more, so progress was slow. Honestly speaking, it had been a while since I'd experienced any bad luck.

Ever since coming to this world, nothing had happened to make me consider myself unlucky even once, unlike on Earth. We were inside a carriage too, so maybe a bit of rain wasn't even that unlucky? Just as that thought crossed my mind, I was proven wrong. The carriage came to a stop and an escort immediately came over.

"My Lord, it appears the rain has caused a landslide up ahead. We have confirmed that the road will be blocked for the foreseeable future."

"What? Are you sure?"

"Yes, it's completely blocked. There are quite a few boulders and trees that have fallen as well, so we cannot pass like this."

"Any detour?"

"The route is still being confirmed, but it will be quite a distance from here, and all the possible roads have had reports of large bandit groups. According to one of the men with a weather forecasting skill, the rain should stop in a few hours. I suggest we make camp away from the landslide while waiting for the rain to stop, then work from tonight to tomorrow to clear the road so we can reach Gimul Town as soon as possible. If I may ask for My Lord's opinion..."

Reinhart thought for a moment before answering.

"Yes, that seems best. Long journeys are tough on Elia, since she

isn't used to them yet, and we want to avoid dangerous roads. We shall follow your suggestion."

"Thank you very much. We shall begin preparations immediately."

The carriage moved once more. I heard them say there was a tree up ahead that they could take shelter from the rain under, but wasn't it bad to stand under a tree in pouring rain...? Well, I suppose it was fine as long as I couldn't hear thunder. I'd just make sure to stay at least two meters away from the trunk of the tree. That should be safer than nothing in case lightning strikes.

The carriage stopped again five minutes later, the people surrounding us bustling about with their work while Araune came inside our carriage.

"We are currently hurrying to set up camp. Please wait a little longer."

Araune said with a smile, but my eyes were much more worried about the escorts I could see running about in the rain behind Araune. As someone who had previously worked for an exploitative employer back on Earth, I knew that an amateur trying to help out would only get in the way, but I still felt bad sitting around while other people were working.

Come to think of it, I had a rain-warding barrier amongst my barrier magic. It's been so long since I used it, I completely forgot about it. That shouldn't get in the way of their work!

"May I use barrier magic?"

"Hmm? Why so suddenly?"

Oh no, I was too abrupt. They wouldn't understand what I was thinking of going by that alone.

"Outside, people getting wet... Use rain-warding barrier... block the rain. Easier to work."

"I see, that would be helpful. I'm sure they would appreciate if you could do that for them."

Once I received permission, I took a coat out of my Item Box that I had made from animal fur. The fur was on the inside of the coat while cloth was stuck to the outside, making it seem inside-out at first glance. But that was the right way to wear it. The outside cloth was painted with the sticky solution of a sticky slime that hardened into a resin-like coating, making it a useful piece of gear that could deflect water. Hunting on rainy days became significantly easier after making this.

I quickly put it on and approached where the people were to activate my barrier magic.

"Rain Ward, cover them and become their shield from the falling rain."

After chanting the spell, a dome-shaped barrier appeared above the workers to block the rain. Neither the barrier nor the magical energy were visible to the eye, so the people looked surprised at the rain coming to a sudden stop. However, Camil noticed in the middle of his work and waved his hand in thanks. The others followed suit and thanked me too, but I stopped them with a wave of my hand and eyed my next target.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to cover the entire area with one barrier, so there were still four other spots where people were gathered that I had to cover. I started with the areas closest to me and went through them in order, finishing off with a barrier over the carriage upon my return.

“Good work, Ryoma.”

“Thank you... Wave.”

I sent the remaining droplets flying off with water magic, before returning to my seat for some warm tea. Then the conversation changed to the topic of my raincoat.

“I've never seen that kind of raincoat before, did you make it yourself?”

“Yes.”

“It seems to repel water very well. Were there any animals in the Forest of Gana with furs that could repel water so ably...?”

“All I did was... paint on the sticky solution of a sticky slime... and let it dry. Water won't seep in. Repels rain.”

“Sticky slime solution had such a property?”

Wait, they didn't know?

“You didn't know?”

“The sticky solution of sticky slimes is only used as a glue.”

Really? For some reason, it looked like Reinbach and Elise had sparkles in their eyes. So even this was a new discovery?! Just how deficient was slime research...?

“Would you let me try that raincoat on for a moment?”

“Just to try.”

I took several pieces out from my Item Box.

“This processed cloth. It's thin, so it's obvious it doesn't let water through... it's worn out. But if you use the cleaner slime before processing, it isn't dirty.”

They used to be scraps from bandits and goblin loincloths, so let's just ignore how worn out it was.

When I offered the cloth out, Reinbach, Elise, and even Reinhart and Sebas took the cloth and wrapped it around their hands before sticking them outside the window to wet them against the rainwater flowing along the barrier.

“Oh! It really is repelling the water!”

“The water isn’t soaking through at all.”

“There’s still the slight cold sensation of the rainwater, but that could be averted comfortably with some fur on the inside, like Ryoma’s raincoat.”

“Ryoma, would you like to collaborate with us to develop these raincoats as a prod...”

“Excuse me. Did you need anything?”

While the four were testing the effects, Araune opened the door to the carriage. Apparently, the signal to summon her while she was sitting outside the carriage had been a hand out the window.

“No, it was nothing. Ryoma was just showing us the raincoat he had developed.”

“Is that so? Then I shall take my leave.”

She moved to close the door, but not before I noticed that her clothes were wet. Araune must have been leaving the barrier to do work as well. I called out to her in a hurry to get her attention as I pulled out a curtain from my Item Box, that was originally from some bandit loot and had been processed to be waterproof.

“Wait, please... Araune.”

“Yes, did you need something?”

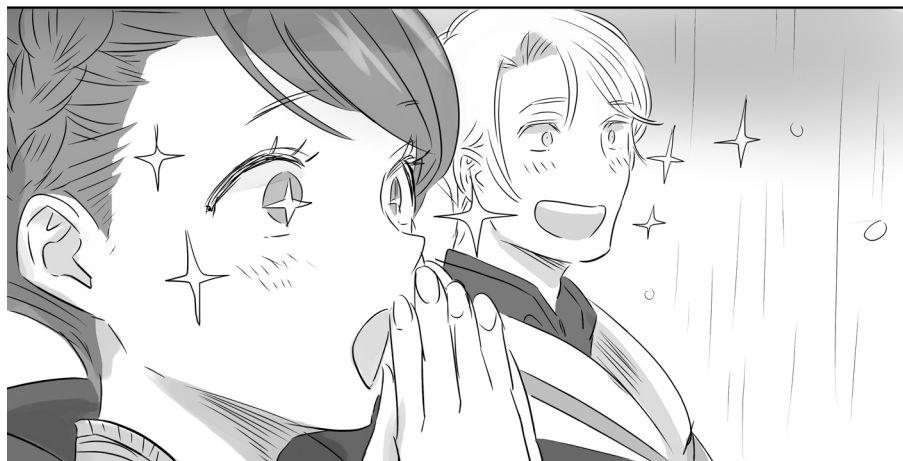
“This, for the rain... won’t get wet.”

“You’re letting me borrow this?”

“Getting wet will be cold. At least cover yourself.”

“Thank you very much. I shall borrow this for a while.”

Araune thanked me with a smile and left, leaving the rest of us to discuss the waterproof cloth enthusiastically.



As far as I could tell from the discussion, the main form of rain protection in this kingdom was made from leather. Larger items like tents were heavy and took up a lot of space. In contrast, the waterproof cloth only needed sticky solution to be painted on and dried, making it much more compact and foldable than leather.

Furthermore, rain protection was meant to be used in the rain. This meant that the rain and dirt got everywhere, staining materials such as leather. It could also grow moldy, too. Of course, they could be protected from that with maintenance, but cleaning the dirt, applying oil, and drying it again... it was all effort. In that regard, the waterproof cloth repelled water and dirt so it was much harder to get dirty, and it could be washed in water too. All it needed was a rinse and dry to clean it.

In reality, all I did was use the water magic Wave to brush off the droplets, then hang it somewhere to dry every time. Even then, it was never really a trouble.

After most of the explanations were done, the conversation moved on to what kinds of things it could be specifically used for. I suggested raincoats and umbrellas with my modern knowledge, then heard about the tools in this world... It finally felt like I had come to a typical other world! Actually, I should have received magic as my power... why did it seem like things were leaning towards internal affairs?

Knowledge of modern concepts and products were the equivalent of cheat codes in this world, right?

As we discussed things, the tent preparations were completed. Honestly, I had forgotten that we were waiting.

“Sorry for the wait! The tents are all ready. Also, the others said to tell the kid thanks.”

“You’re welcome.”

“How much longer until the rain stops?”

“The skill user said another two to three hours, then we’ll begin removing the landslide dirt.”

“All right. Take breaks in shifts until then, and make sure the earth magicians have plenty of rest.”

“Got it.”

We watched Zeph head off to pass on the orders before entering the tent.

To my surprise, there was a large space in the middle of the tent that split off into four individual rooms around the edges. It was a large and luxurious tent.

“The road was a lot bumpier than normal, so make sure you rest well.”

“Yes, I will rest up... to work hard later.”

They were already letting me ride in the carriage with them and providing me with accommodation, so I wanted to do at least this much. That’s why I answered that, but Reinbach looked confused.

“Work hard? What for?”

“The landslide dirt... I will remove it... with my earth magic.”

“The escorts can handle that, so you can rest, you know?”

“I’ve been in your care so much already. It will be for my own sake. Please let me do it.”

“Hmm... Then you can help out, if you insist. However, you must take breaks if you get tired, understand? You’ve already used barrier magic so many times, and running out of magic energy is painful.”

Oh, so he was worried about that. I was very grateful for the consideration.

“Thank you very much, I’ll be careful.”

Several hours after that exchange...

The downpour stopped as predicted, so work began on clearing the aftermath of the landslide. The escorts who could use earth magic were split into squads around me, each clearing away the dirt. In particular, the squad consisting of mostly earth magicians, who were using Break Rock to break the large boulders and Rock to compact the dirt to an appropriate size, was completing the removal work more efficiently than the other squads.

As for what I was doing among them, I had Create Block — a spell I created by combining Break Rock and Rock while I was trying to hollow out my cave in the forest. By using that to create a large number of blocks at once, I could change the dirt into something the slimes could carry.

What I could tell from the beginning was that the others were dealing with the dirt and stone separately, while I was going considerably faster owing to dealing with both of those at once. Furthermore, because the slimes were set up to carry the blocks in a bucket brigade style, all I had to do was use magic. The work progressed at a tremendously fun and fast pace.

Seeing me like that, one of the escort men came over.

“Do you have a moment?”

“How can I help?”

“Ryoma, was it? Just how are you using that magic? My principal occupation is a swordsman, so I’m not that good at magic... But I’ve never seen a spell that deals with both dirt and stone at once. Could you teach it to me, if possible?”

“This is a spell called Create Block. Anyone who can use Break Rock and Rock should be able to use this as well... You know how Break Rock turns stone into dirt, and Rock turns dirt into stone?”

“Yeah.”

“So, you just imagine, turning stone into dirt and dirt into stone as one spell. If you do that, all the stones within range of your magic will turn to dirt... and all the dirt will stay as dirt until they become stone in the next step. This is the step where you make the stone a size you want... In my case, it's this size that's easy for the slimes to carry.”

The man nodded in understanding and tried it on a nearby boulder. The resulting blocks were of varying size, but he had successfully turned both stone and dirt into stones of more manageable size that could be carried.

“Ooh! It really worked! It looks like it'll take some practice before I can get the stones a consistent size, but it consumes less magic energy than doing the two actions separately. Thanks, Ryoma.”

“No... I'm happy to help.”

He asked for permission to teach the others, which I agreed with, as one or two people wouldn't make much difference, and he ran off to teach the others Create Block.

As I worked silently beside the sidelong glances of the escorts, the sun set before I knew it, and the order to stop for the day was given out.

“Welcome back, Ryoma.”

When I returned to the tent, Elise came out to greet me, but...

“Bwugh!”

“Ryoma! You worked so hard!”

“L-Let go... my n-neck...”

I was about to return the greeting when she grabbed me in a hug.
C-Can't breathe! My nose and mouth are buried in her chest! I beg of you, let g—

“My Lady! You're strangling him! Please let go!”

“Huh? Ah!”

“Gwuh! Hah...”

“I'm sorry! Are you okay?!”

“Hah... Yes, I'm fine. Umm... Lilian, right?”

“Y-Yes!”

“Thank you very much. You saved me...”

“No, I'm glad you're safe. The food is ready, would you like to eat now?”

“Yes, please.”

She then proceeded to lead me to a table in an inner room.

“Hello, Ryoma. I heard you were a great help. Thanks for your hard work.”

“Can you eat? Don't push yourself too hard.”

“My body is fine.”

“Oh ho, I thought you used quite a bit of magic?”

"It was amazing, that spell. Create Block, was it?"

"That's right."

"Thanks to Ryoma's slimes and that spell you taught to all of the earth magicians, it looks like we'll be able to finish clearing up the landslide earlier than expected."

"I'm glad to hear that."

From what they told me, one person from today had mastered Create Block perfectly, while three others were able to use it proficiently, speeding up the process a great deal. For the record, the one who mastered it was Golche, the man who spoke to me first. Eventually, dinner was brought over for everyone to dig in, which was when Eliaria asked me a question.

"Ryoma, Ryoma. How much magic energy do you have?"

"Huh?"

Come to think of it, how much magic energy did I have right now? I heard it was meant to increase with prolonged use of magic, but...

"Is something the matter?"

"I don't... know."

"Huh?! But normally a ten-year-old would have gone to the church for... Oh, I see. Ryoma lived in the forest... Then how did you know your limit before now?"

"The feeling of my body... and intuition."

"And that works out for you?"

"I got used to it, so it's not a problem. Do people normally get measured at 10 years old?"

"In normal households, yes. They have the church measure their status. That's when it's decided whether a future as a magician is viable, from looking at the magic energy number. Us nobles get measured at 5 years old and begin training early, though. Well, if you managed to continuously use so much magic without feeling the effects of depletion, you must have a pretty high limit."

The topic moved on from there, turning to plans for the future and our destination town next.

After the meal, I was allocated a room inside the tent. There were no more duties left for me today, and tomorrow would start with more dirt clearing before departing on the journey. I should get to bed early to rest... but there was one thing bothering me.

During dinner, when we were talking about my magic energy. Eliaria's eyes kept glancing at me while we were discussing it. That was a thoughtful look she had, right? While I noticed her gaze, I have no idea why she was looking at me like that. We only talked about magic energy for a little while... but I was starting to think the topic was changed on purpose, so that we didn't linger on it.

Did I say something wrong? I was curious. But I missed the chance to ask. Next time I get an opportunity, I'll ask. It would be ideal if there was a way to ask casually, but otherwise, I'd just wait until we got a little closer...

Speaking of which, how long have I been thinking for? Likely quite a while, judging from how heavy my eyelids are.

Unable to resist the call of sleep, I nodded off like that.

Chapter 1 Episode 11: Arriving in Gimul

Three days later...

After the landslide, the journey progressed without incident. Because I was constantly with someone these past few days, my speech had gradually grown more fluent. They told me I was still a little stiff with my words, but there was no problem understanding what I meant, and we were finally arriving at our destination of Gimul Town.

“We’re here. This is the town of Gimul.”

“So this is Gimul...”

It was a peaceful town surrounded by tall outer walls and lots of greenery. That was the first impression I received. It was a little smaller than the town of Keleban we visited before, but that just made it seem calmer.

I was told that the mines were nearby and the steel industry was the main source of livelihood, so I had imagined more bustle... But this was good in its own way.

However, according to what Reinhart said on the way, the production of iron had dwindled in recent years, making one of the objectives of this trip to inspect and determine whether the mines should be closed from lack of profit...

Although, the way Reinhart had stated ‘There’s more than one mine, so there shouldn’t be a large impact on the town for at least another ten years,’ made it sound like the mine’s closure was practically finalized already.

Maybe he didn’t think it was a topic to be sharing with a child... Well, the mining output had been practically zero for three years now. It seemed like the only condition for avoiding closure was to find a new vein of ore. All the miners of that particular mine had already stopped working there since last year. It made sense that they’d prefer to work somewhere with results. Especially if it involved their income.

“All right, let’s leave our things at the inn, then head to the Tamers’ Guild for registration.”

The Tamers’ Guild was an establishment where tamers and summoners — the two types of spellcasters that could control monsters — were able to register in order to receive jobs and information services. It also assisted in finding accommodation for

tamers who lived with their familiars and purchasing cheap familiar food for affiliated members. There were similar places; like the Adventurers' Guild, Magic Guild, and Merchants' Guild; but the Tamers' Guild had far fewer members in comparison due to public fear of tamer familiars. Thus, the scale of the guild was inevitably smaller and had fewer branches, although there was one in this town to fill the demand for transporting goods from the mines.

...Well, according to Elise, anyway.

She was in a very good mood today, humming a song as she held both my and Eliaria's hand as we walked, having just dropped our belongings of at the inn. But there was something bothering me.

"How much information should I give the guild?"

"The submission of information is up to the person who first made the discovery, so as much as you're comfortable with is fine."

Well, in that case...

"Just the evolution conditions of a slime and the way to contract a big slime, then. I'll also register the two new species of slime."

"You'll keep the use of sticky slime solution a secret?"

"Yes, if it's going to be used to sell waterproof cloth, then we don't want imitations circulating."

"That's true."

Our plan was to head to the Tamers' Guild as soon as we were done talking, but Reinhach stepped in before that.

"You haven't been to the church yet, have you, Ryoma? In that case, shouldn't you go get your status numbers disclosed by the church first?"

At those words, both Reinhart and Elise were reminded of what to do first. Apparently, the church distributed 'status boards' — tools that could be used to view one's own stats and make registering for guilds go more smoothly. For example, the condition to register for the Tamers' Guild was the ability to use taming or summoning magic, so having the status board display that would allow for instant approval. Without a status board, you would be made to wait until an official was available to witness you make a contract with a previously prepared slime before you could register.

And so, with that change of plans, we first headed for the Church of Creationism in Gimul instead. For the record, the slimes were waiting back at the inn. It would be one thing if we were just going to the Tamers' Guild, but alas...

At the church, we were greeted by an elderly woman with a gentle smile, dressed in a nun's habit.

"Welcome to the church. Are you here to pray today?"

"We'd like to get a status board issued for this child. Some

peculiar circumstances have prevented him from obtaining one before now.”

“I will be in your care.”

“In that case, please come this way. I shall lead you to the baptism room.”

It was forbidden for anyone else to enter the baptism room, so I said my temporary farewells with everyone before following the sister through the church.

“This way.”

“Excuse me.”

In the room I was led to, there was a pedestal with a round crystal like I had seen at the office in Keleban Town.

It looked exactly the same at a glance, apart from the pedestal being palm-sized with a vertically long rectangular recess.

“This will be your status board. Once slotted into the pedestal, the baptism will be completed with a touch of the crystal. There will be a bright light when you touch the crystal, but you can rest assured that it will not harm you.”

“I understand.”

The woman showed me a transparent board before slotting it into the pedestal and walking to the opposite side.

“Go ahead and touch the crystal.”

“Okay.”

Slightly nervous, I slowly touched the crystal.

The next moment, a strong light filled the room like when I first came to this world, making me squeeze my eyes shut against the brightness.

The light passed through my eyelids, making it red until it gradually faded.

“Uh... Huh?!”

Once the light faded, I opened my eyes to see a room that wasn’t before me a moment ago.

...There was no mistaking it. I would never forget. This was the room where the gods...

“Oi! Ryoma!”

“Over here!”

“Behind you!”



The voices that reached me through my daze made me turn around to see the three gods that had sent me to this world.

They were standing as though they had been waiting for me.

The fact that they were here meant that this had to be that place.

“Gain, Kufo, Lulutia... Have I died again?”

“No, no, you’re fine. We’ve just pulled your spirit here for a bit. You’ll regain consciousness before long. Time will remain the same too.”

“I didn’t think we’d be able to meet you again either, but after you prayed to our stone statues in your forest home every day...”

“You shut yourself away in the forest for three years, doing nothing but training and research, no? It’s because you were self-sufficient with your meals and ate simply, resulting in a lifestyle that was similar to priesthood training.”

Really?

“You’ve actually met us before, so you believed in our existence from the bottom of your heart. And you prayed to us every day for three years. That was more than enough to fulfill the conditions to bestow the oracle skill on you during baptism.”

“We’ll be able to talk to you — just a little, though — from now on, too.”

“I see. At any rate, I’m glad to see you all again.”

That was the one thing I wanted to say. I had been thinking a lot about what I would say once I could talk to them again, but nothing came to mind at the moment.

“The same goes for us. You came to the church like you promised.”

“You look like you’re having fun in your new life. We watched you the whole time, but there was never a dull moment.”

“We never imagined you’d stay in the forest for three years, though. It feels short to us, but that isn’t the case for humans, no? Above all, while that forest is comparatively safer, it still has its dangers. We assumed you would only stay for a year at most...”

At that, the three of them wore strained smiles.

“You used all the skill and magic at your hands to create an environment that you could live in modestly for three years — or more, if you so desired.”

“That house looked simple, but it was actually amazingly well-made. It was extremely safe, spacious, and clean. You had assembled impressive facilities too. Especially your bathtub, which are only for the wealthy class in this world. And your toilet, which may possibly be the cleanest you can find in this world.”

“Even we hadn’t imagined your slime research to result in such a

way. There were barely any who researched slimes of their own initiative, after all. Those two species in particular were a surprise, the cleaner and scavenger ones. Those were new species, you know?"

"...O-Oh. So they really were... The tamer family I met by coincidence said they didn't know of them, so that's what I presumed."

"Indeed. Slimes were originally created by me, but all I did was give them adaptability to their surroundings and the ability to multiply. The potential for evolution was infinite after that. However, they were just so weak the other animals kept exterminating them until they just stopped developing after a few new species appeared. Now, it's like the land environment decides which slime appears. Even I had forgotten that new species of slimes could be born. This is truly marvelous!"

Was slime research really that lacking?

"Even I, the creator of slimes, had forgotten... I would wager to say that you're even more knowledgeable than me about slimes now."

"Even if it was only limited to slimes, having more knowledge than a god sounds..."

"But you... you still have many thoughts about slimes, no? I took a peek at your research, but you've thought of things I never even considered. In the first place, gods aren't almighty beings. We each have our strengths and weaknesses. And sometimes that may lead to us being surprised by those who live in the worlds we watch over."

"For example, as gods, we cannot be harmed by humans. But if you were to punch us here, we'd be beaten up easily. We don't have combat skills, after all. We can use our divine powers to protect ourselves by causing all your blows to miss, but we cannot best you in a technical fight. A god that specialized in war wouldn't lose, though."

"Huh... Really now."

That was news to me.

"Well, humans do hold this certain image about gods. ...But more than anything, I'm glad you're having fun. Who would have imagined you'd end up associated with that family..."

Did they know the people of the House of Jamil? Well, they were gods so that shouldn't be a surprise.

"Based on your words just now, is there something special about those people? From the view of a god, and not social rank."

Lulutia answered my question.

"Their ancestors are otherworlders we sent from Earth."

"Is that true?!"

"Yup. She was a good girl. She wanted to become an animal trainer and didn't seem to understand the situation very well, so we ended up granting her wish of controlling animals before sending her

here.”

“Was that taming magic, by any chance?”

“That’s half-correct. There was a similar skill already at the time. She studied that skill and combined it with the power we gave her to create taming magic. After perfecting taming magic, her achievements earned a noble rank from the king. She was fairly popular for her beauty, and she went on to fall in love with another noble and marry him. Ever since, her bloodline has had generations of honorable tamers.”

“Not to mention in the Jamil family, Reinbach has my protection, Reinhart has Kufo’s, and Elise has Lulutia’s bestowed. And the young Eliaria inherited otherworlder traits that skipped generations in her ancestry. Of course we would know of them.”

“We check on them second to only you.”

“Huh. So the young miss has talent for taming magic?”

“She has the talent, but that girl has inherited much more than just taming magic. Her tamer potential comes from her father’s bloodline. The reason why her blood is so strong is because of a different otherworlder on her mother’s side of the family. This one was your classic otaku. He originally hated exercise, so he completely gave up on martial arts and put everything he had into magic. And unlike Ryoma, he also wished to be powerful at it, so his magical force and firing speed was tremendous. Because of that, he took a while to learn all of the magics.”

“Self-restraint wasn’t a term in his dictionary, that’s for sure.”

“His one saving grace was that he never committed any evil, since he was such a coward. I shouldn’t be saying this as the one who gave him the power, but we were pretty nervous right up until he died.”

Just how amazing was this otherworlder...? Well, whatever.

“From what I’ve heard, there are quite a few otherworlders. Will I ever meet any?”

“We only ever bring one person over at a time when we take Earth’s magic energy. The shortest gap between which is 200 years, so there shouldn’t be multiple otherworlders in a single time period.”

“Although we have brought people over during emergencies, like when magic depletion intensifies during times of war. But normally, it wouldn’t happen. There are no large wars ongoing right now, so we probably won’t need to within your lifetime.”

“If you want to know more about otherworlders, search for their books. The majority of them had high level or unique skills because of our divine powers, so many of them ended up in fairy tales and legends as heroes. For example, the war happened in the same period as the mighty magician on Eliaria’s mother’s side, so we brought another one over and they were both known as heroes. Other than

that... there's a folktale of one arrogant fellow who was treated as a demon king and defeated. You've heard of the Alchemy King on your journey, right?"

"Yeah, when we were talking about alchemy. The Alchemy King was an otherworlder too?"

"That's right. An *extremely* infuriating one at that!"

"He wanted alchemy as his bonus for being transferred, but when we said it didn't exist in the other world, he demanded we create it! The title of the Alchemy King was something he insisted his subordinates call him, too; he was just that full of himself."

"It was hopeless trying to deal with him, so I just made something up."

"Made something up... So the reason why alchemy is strangely easy to use is..."

"Indeed, it was because I threw it together."

"I knew it! I thought it was too simple, just drawing a magic circle and placing the materials on it before passing magic energy through the circle while thinking of the separated components! All the other magics needed energy control and adjustments, so it was odd."

"I didn't want to waste time listening to his selfish demands. No matter how free we may be, being idle is much more preferable to insufferable company."

"While I agree with that part, still..."

"It's actually fairly difficult for the people of this world, you know? This world has none of the knowledge Earth has of the chemical elements. The Alchemy King was a student on Earth so he had no trouble reaping the rewards, but that was the golden age of alchemy, barely anyone has been able to reproduce it afterward. The Alchemy King was especially obsessed with gold and profit, so he never taught anyone else the knowledge and skills up until his death. Modern alchemists are just the sad remains of the Alchemy King's actions."

"So that's why..."

That otherworlder sure was a free spirit...

"But you're on the more docile side of otherworlders we've brought here. It may feel like you're being swept along by events, but that's not the case. You're still making decisions about yourself by yourself, following your own rules, and trying new things of your own will. You're a very desirable type of otherworlder to not only us, but this world of Seilfall too."

"Why is that?"

"Heheh! We're still gods, after all. We have to sound divine sometimes."

"Oh, is that a fact..."

“There’s no need to think too deeply. Even if you lived your previous life being swept along by others, that doesn’t mean it’s still happening here. And going with the flow isn’t always a bad thing anyway.”

“As long as life is fun, that should be enough, don’t you think?”

“That’s true. Yeah. Thanks.”

“Don’t worry about it. We’re gods, giving advice is a simple task.”

“You’re our source of fun too, so it’s a token of our gratitude.”

“...It seems like you’ve reached your limit over here, too. That was just a little advice from us before you leave.”

“Thank you. Unfortunately I wasn’t very eloquent in my previous life, so this is all I can say, really.”

“Your feelings have been conveyed.”

“We’re all watching over you.”

“The other gods have been sneaking some looks too, lately.”

“Huh? Other gods?”

The astounding words made my eyes widen greatly.

“There was the god of war and god of magic, which was rare for those otherworlder haters.”

“We’re the only ones who watch you frequently, but all kinds of gods have taken a look at you when the mood strikes.”

“No one warned me of that...”

“There’s nothing you have to do, so it’s fine. Ah, but the god of skill and craft has bestowed their protection on you. It’s nothing bad, so you can relax.”

“It appears he’s taken a liking to your drinking habits from your previous life. He’s also the god of wine, after all. You didn’t seem to have much fun drinking, but he praised you for the amount you downed. He also said the drunken fist you were practicing was a rather amusing form of martial arts.”

“Drunken fist? I sometimes imitated what I saw in movies back in the forest. He was watching? I didn’t think anyone would like that...”

“You never know what will happen in life. Well, the background we prepared for you did have you raised by your grandfather, who was a dwarf. Tekun, the god of wine, is mostly worshiped by the dwarves, so that part fits perfectly.”

“True, I guess it wouldn’t be suspicious that way?”

“It’ll be fine. Now, it looks like this will be all for now. Time is really up.”

Huh?! Ah, right... We had been chatting easily when time had run out before I knew it. The light started glowing around me once more.

“Even though we finally met again...”

“Don’t look so disappointed, we can talk again for short periods of time whenever you come to the church, and we should be able to

meet like this again too. Although this result was a little unexpected.”

“...I see. See you later, then.”

“Yup, later.”

“You truly are interesting. We’ll be watching over you until the next time we meet again.”

Gain said as a soft light filled my vision, and when I opened my eyes again I was back in the baptism room of the church with the sister.

“That was quite some light. They say the brighter the light, the more loved by the gods you are, so you may have been blessed with the protection of one of the gods. Please check your status board for it later.”

Like Gain had said, it appeared that time had been frozen here. But wasn’t she going to ask about the protections?

“Thank you very much. Aren’t you going to ask about the protections?”

“The protection is something bestowed by the gods, so the only ones who have a right to know are you and the god who bestowed it. If you have any questions, I will answer to the best of my ability, but I will not ask anything myself. Also, it’s normal to hide everything on your status board other than your name, age, and race. It’s personal information, after all. To hide any displayed information, all you have to do is think it in your head. Please give it a go.”

I looked at the information displayed on the status board.

Name: Ryoma Takebayashi

Gender: Male

Age: 11

Race: Human

Physical Energy: 11,052

Magical Energy: 198,000

Everyday Skills

Housekeeping 10, Etiquette 7, Performance 3, Singing 3, Calculation 5

Combat Skills

Unarmed Combat 7, Sword Mastery 7, Dagger Mastery 6, Hidden Weapon Mastery 7, Spear Mastery 4, Bow Mastery 6, Staff Mastery 6, Chain Weapon Mastery 4, Throwing Weapon Mastery 7, Stealth 7, Trapping 6, Body Control 6, Energy Meditation 5

Magic Skills

Taming Magic 2, Barrier Magic 2, Healing Magic 1, Alchemy 2, Fire Magic 3, Water Magic 3, Wind Magic 2, Earth Magic 4, Neutral Magic 3, Lightning Magic 1, Ice Magic 2, Poison Magic 2, Wood Magic 3, Light Magic 2, Dark Magic 1, Space Magic 3, Magic Detection 3, Magic Control 4, Magic Recovery Speed 2

Crafting Skills

Medicine 6, Blacksmithing 1, Architecture 3, Woodworking 3,
Modeling 4, Painting 4

Resistance Skills

Physical Pain Resistance 8, Mental Pain Resistance 9, Health 7, Stench
Resistance 3

Special Skills

Oracle 3, Survival Arts 5, Life Enhancement 3, Super Recovery 3,
Stamina Enhancement 6

Titles

Rise from Below
Overcame an Unhappy Life
Beloved Child of the Gods
Apprentice of the Sage
Apprentice of the God of Military Arts

Protections

Protection of Gain the Creator
Protection of Kufo, God of Life
Protection of Lulutia, Goddess of Love
Protection of Tekun, God of Wine

I had learned that magic energy would go up with regular use before transferring here, but it looked like several skills had leveled up too.

And now that I looked at it again, there really was a lot of magic skills... hmm? The apprentice titles were a balance of the skill levels that had been written in the letter when I first came to this world. I had protections from the three gods and the wine god Tekun.

For now, I should hide everything except my name, age, and race... There.

“I’m done.”

“Then I shall lead you to the room where your companions are waiting. We can discuss the details where they can listen, too.”

At the woman’s prompting, we left the room.

That was when I heard voices from outside.

“Wait! Wait up!”

“Ahahaha! I’m over here!”

When I looked in the direction of the voices, I saw some children in worn-out clothing playing outside the window.

“Those are the children being taken care of by the church. They’re always full of energy and play outside like that once their chores are done.”

I didn’t know if they were orphans or there because of family circumstances, but whatever.

“Now, let’s go.”

Thus, I was led to a room where the ducal house and Sebas were

all waiting expectantly.

“Sorry for the wait, the baptism has been completed without issue.”

“Thank you for waiting, everyone.”

“If that is all, then I will be leaving here. Feel free to use this room until you wish to leave.”

“Thank you very much.”

“You’re welcome. Now, if you would excuse me.”

Immediately after we met up, the woman departed. I watched her leave the room and close the door behind her.

“Mister Reinhart, why did she look like she was in such a hurry to leave...?”

“The status board has personal information, after all. She was being considerate.”

“This is a room prepared for people to discuss the contents of their status board with their family in secret.”

“Really?”

“Yes. One should not reveal it carelessly. It used to be illegal to hide your information, but as more people used the contents for malicious purposes it became commonplace to keep it confidential.”

“You can get the general gist of someone’s past from their skills, and for a fighter it would be disadvantageous to reveal your fighting style. Even your magic and physical strength is directly related to your power, so nowadays you would only show the people you trust. The same goes for protections, for similar reasons. All you reveal is your name, age, and race, and some choose to display their titles too.”

“I see.”

“That’s why you have to make sure you keep yours a secret, okay? You can ask us if there’s anything you don’t understand, but you don’t have to tell us anything you don’t want to, all right?”

These people were truly kind-hearted... I’ll decide what to tell them later.

“I understand.”

Once I gave that answer, Reinbach nodded in satisfaction and continued speaking with a serious look.

“Now, Ryoma. Now that you’ve received your status board, there’s one thing I’d like to say.”

“What is that?”

“It’s about your abilities. Based on what we’ve seen until now, your abilities are extremely refined compared to other children your age. Because of that, you will be approached by many bad people. If you want to avoid that, you must either hide your powers or quickly earn status to protect yourself. However, in your case, your abilities are so strong they will be difficult to hide. That’s why you should

register with a guild quickly, in order to obtain status. I'm talking about the ranks within guilds, to be precise. If something happens, we will lend you our strength, but you yourself need to be aware."

"In your case, your abilities are so disproportionate with your age, it's obvious that you have a god's protection. Depending on which one, you may seriously be targeted."

...I hadn't really been keeping an eye on it myself, but was it really that strange? I hadn't even gone all out in front of them yet...

"I'll be careful. ...Hm?"

That was when Eliaria started glancing at me again, like before. I wasn't doing anything in particular right now, maybe she wanted to ask something?

"Is something the matter?"

"Huh?!"

"No, you just looked like you had something to say."

"Well..."

After I said that, Eliaria hesitated for a moment before answering honestly.

"Actually, I was curious about Ryoma's magic energy."

"My magic energy?"

"Yes. The other day, I watched you use so much magic, yet you said you were nowhere near running out. When I asked Father, he said a normal person would have collapsed already, so I was wondering how much magic energy you had."

If it was to these people, then it should be fine to disclose my magic energy. Considering how they had already seen me use enough magic to knock a normal person out, there was no point in hiding it. I used it in a similar way when I was in the forest, but... Oh, that must be why they told me to hide it. That reaffirmed my understanding.

"Ah... When I checked just now, it said 198,000."

At my answer, the members of the duke's family widened their eyes a little, and Eliaria looked a little conflicted. But, that was all.

Huh? This was a weaker reaction than I expected...

"198,000. So Ryoma can use that many magics with that much magic energy."

"That's because the more energy you have, the more magic you can use."

"Huh? No, that's not what I mean, I'm talking about the fact you can use magic properly."

"Properly?"

"Err... Am I mistaken?"

Our conversation seemed rather disjointed, and Eliaria turned to Sebas with a troubled look for help.

"Is it possible that Master Ryoma is unaware of the side effects of

large magic energy?"

"Side effects? Such a thing exists?"

At my answer, Eliaria was taken aback while Sebas and the other adults looked like they had expected as much. When I asked them to clarify, first they explained that having more magic energy was a huge advantage to using magic. That was for sure. However, when there was too much magic energy within the body, it made it harder to control and learn to use magic. Apparently, even trying to use just a little magic could cause the magic energy to come rushing out like a broken tap. Even a normal magician needed training to hold back their magic energy, so more training was needed for greater amounts.

...Now that they mentioned it, something did come to mind.

When I first used Break Rock after coming to this world, it was all I could do to make a hole the size of my finger. I hadn't noticed at first because I was happy to see results at all, but without proper control over the magic energy leaving the body, it would scatter everywhere. When that happened, the effect of the magic weakened. In other words, the magic energy back then was being discharged with only a small amount going into the magic effect.

I figured that out as I continued to use magic, and with more use I learned to control it. Once I became able to maintain my magic energy, the effects of the spells grew dramatically with the same energy cost. After improving that for three years, I was able to use magic like back at the landslide. The same earth magic as back then could now be used with more power and freedom. For me, it was only natural 'to be unable to use magic,' so there was no particular sense of difficulty — only growth. In reality, all I had done was grow, but for the people of this world, a child using a tremendous amount of magic without problem meant they had either trained a lot or were extremely talented.

...It was a bit strange to think of myself that way, though. Well, I get it now at least.

"I didn't have anyone to compare myself with until now, so I didn't realize."

"The fact that Ryoma can use magic so easily is an amazing thing, you know? Even though I'm the same age, I can't use magic very well."

"You too?"

"...I actually have 200,000 magic energy."

"200?!"

That was more than me! Well, no wonder the adults didn't react much! Come to think of it, Gain and the others had mentioned how strongly she had inherited the blood of her otherworlder ancestor, a mighty magician. It all made sense. So that's why she kept glancing at

me. She had been interested in how I could use magic so easily, while having nearly as much magic energy as her.

“Everything makes sense now.”

“I’m glad to hear that. I’ve never met anyone with as much magic energy as me before. To be honest, I was curious as to how much magic you could use, as well as how you learned them so well, but it was hard to ask...”

“How about I show you all the magic-related entries on my status board? I want to know how much myself.”

I manipulated the newly created status board to only display my magic skills for everyone.

“Hmm... You have an impressive range of magics, and they’re all high-level for your age. I heard you had all the elements, but seeing it in reality is...”

“All the lower are over level two, and there are a few middle elements at level two and three. That’s plenty.”

“Your earth and space magic is especially high-level. I’ve heard that space magic is hard to level, you did well getting it that high.”

“You may even surpass me in the future. You even have the skills for magic detection, control, and recovery speed.”

“I used magic to survive in the forest, so I was using it pretty much every day... Fire and water for cooking and bathing, earth and space for hunting.”

“Hmm, did you ever use attack spells?”

“No, I normally used my bow and traps to hunt. I can use Fireball, but it burns meat and makes it inedible. I used Earth Needle to set spikes at the bottom of pitfall traps.”

“I see, so you’ve only used magic for living to level your skills until now. In that case, it would be good to learn some attack spells, too. There’s no demerits to knowing them, and there are the rare monsters that can only be affected by magic.”

So such monsters existed. Wait, that was typical of a monster from light novels about other worlds. I had been living as a recluse for so long, I completely forgot. Better start learning attack spells from now on.

“You’re right, I’d like to try that.”

“The lower elemental magics are comparatively easier to learn, so you should be able to use intermediate difficulty spells with your current level. You seem to have plenty of magic energy, so you may be able to use advanced ones with earth magic.”

“Ryoma has lots of magic energy too, so if he holds back his consumption with his magic control, he’ll be able to increase his recovery speed even more. Which means even more practice can be done in a day.”

“It’s extremely beneficial for a magician, so don’t let that talent go to waste.”

“Yes, I’ll work hard.”

Once I finally understood how much of an exception I was outside of the forest, the voice of Eliaria still looking at my status board silently reached my ears.

“Ryoma trained his magic by continuously using his magic in his daily life. If I did that, my magic would also...”

“Even if you don’t use it in your daily life, if you play around with it in your free time, you’ll get it.”

“Play around...?”

She seemed motivated so I told her what I did in the forest, but that was received with a weird look.

“Don’t you generally try all kinds of things out with basic magic?”

“I do not. Practice always involves releasing the decided magic accurately.”

“Magic skill is directly linked to the security of one’s income and lifestyle, so you don’t hear about people playing around with it.”

“For example, fire magic is used in blacksmiths and steel mills, places with strong heat. Ice and space magic is used at restaurants to preserve and transport food. Earth and wood magic is used in architecture and farming, and other industries like that. So if you’re good at one of them, your chance of employment and promotion over others increases.”

I see. I knew it wasn’t forbidden for any religious reasons, but magic was generally treated like food. That’s why playing around with magic seemed to feel like a waste of magic energy, I guess. Which meant... it was bad? Just as the thought popped into my head, the three adults backed me up.

“Play with magic. It’s not something you hear often, but you should try it if you’re interested, Elia.”

“That’s right. Even if you use a little to play around, since it’s Elia there’ll still be plenty of magic energy left for normal lessons too.”

“Wouldn’t it be good as a break from training too?”

I wondered if it was okay to treat it so lightly, but Eliaria did have a lot of magic energy. A little shouldn’t hurt. Most importantly, it was a suggestion I made just after showing my magic skills, so they would probably place their bets on it. All I was told was that they needed to check if it was safe, which was a given. In which case, I could teach the young lady how to play with magic myself. But we were in the church right now, so it wasn’t the right time or place for that.

“If there’s a chance in the future, I’ll teach you a little.”

“Really?! I would love that!”

Eliaria grabbed my hand happily.

It really was nothing more than the basic magic any magician could use, but seeing her this happy made me feel good too.

“Now, shall we get going? We’ve discussed all there is to discuss here, and there’s still more to do.”

Like Reinhart said, we still had to go register at the guild. Having been reminded of that, we all put the church behind us and headed for the Tamers’ Guild.

Chapter 1 Episode 12: Guild Registration

The first thing that caught my eye upon arrival at the Tamers' Guild were the carts and monsters tied around the rest stop. As a mining town, the main use for monsters was in transportation, so all the monsters I could see were large ones. As far as I could see, there were many monsters that resembled cows and horses, as well as some boar-like ones. Smaller monsters were allowed inside the guild, so I could take my slimes inside once they used their minimize skill. The inside of the guild was mostly populated by people, but I could see goblins carrying things around here and there. Within all that, Reinhart led us to the front counter where the receptionist was working.

"Welcome to the Gimul branch of the Tamers' Guild. What might be your business today...?"

"I'd like to register this boy and my daughter, as well as submit some information."

"Understood. Please come inside."

The receptionist led us to a deeper room, where we waited while drinking tea. Several minutes later, a man wearing slightly fancier clothes than the other workers appeared, holding a writing utensil. He had white and red hair in an 8:2 ratio hardened with styling products, and looked rather old. The light reflected off his hair as he entered, and he peered at us through his gold-rimmed glasses as he spoke.

"Long time no see, Reinbach. You too, young Reinhart and Elise."

"It's good to see you again."

"Glad to see you're doing well, Taylor."

It seemed like the man was acquainted with the duke's family.

"I've been doing well enough. I haven't met the two over there before. My name is Taylor Smit, head of the Gimul branch of the Tamers' Guild. That said... Reinbach, did you have two grandchildren? I'm fairly sure I heard it was one, but my memory has been failing me as of late... I apologize if I'm mistaken."

"My only grandchild is Eliaria, the girl there. The boy's name is Ryoma. We became acquainted a few days ago, by some twist of fate. I'd like to register him in the guild alongside my granddaughter. And I'd like you to raise his rank as fast as possible."

Can you even make such a request?! So I thought, looking at

Reinbach's face, but he merely appeared cool and composed.

"Taylor and I are old friends; he's a trustworthy man. You don't need to worry, Ryoma."

Taylor supported those words with a casual remark.

"If you're being recommended by Reinbach, I can accommodate you to a degree. However, you need an appropriate amount of competency and achievements to raise your rank. I cannot bend on that area."

"That won't be a problem. I'm only making this request because Ryoma's competency far exceeds his age."

"This is just in order to keep any unwelcome fellows away... I'd like to hear more, but first we'll take care of registration. Just registering won't be an issue at all."

Taylor took two sheets of paper out of the stack he was carrying under his arm, then handed them to me and Eliaria.

"First, I'd like you to fill in your details on this form. Do you need someone to write for you, Ryoma?"

"Thank you for your consideration. I should be able to manage writing it myself."

I quickly filled out the form and handed it in. The details needed were: name, age, race, and how long I had learned taming magic or summoning magic for.

"...The young lady made her first contract just the other day, I see. Congratulations."

"Thank you very much."

"I pray that you'll become a wonderful tamer in the future."

Taylor turned a friendly smile towards Eliaria, before looking at the form I filled out next.

"And Ryoma's first contract was three years ago. What are your familiars now?"

"Slimes."

When I answered slimes, Taylor made a conflicted face.

"Slimes make things a little more difficult... After all, the main job for tamers in this town is transportation between the mines. If you had at least goblins or kobolds, it would make it easier to recommend jobs. We have a rule against referring any jobs through our service which are clearly unsuitable. You need achievements to increase your rank, which means successfully completing jobs little by little. But if you can't take on the jobs, then there's no way to raise your rank."

If the job wasn't completed successfully, then trust in the guild would drop, so there wasn't much to be done about that. What if I told him about my research? With that thought, I looked at Reinbach to confirm before showing him the two new species of slimes and the method of contracting big slimes I had discovered. Taylor listened to

the information about the two new species without any particular reaction, then stopped me before listening to how to form a big slime contract and made an even more conflicted face.

“Hmm... While I would normally consider the method of contracting a big slime an achievement...”

“Is there a problem?”

The branch head explained with a bitter expression.

“In recent times, the Tamers’ Guild has had a tendency to value stronger familiars as a sign of an excellent tamer.”

“That’s nothing new, people thought the same back when we were still fledglings.”

“You are correct. But it’s gotten worse in recent years, and people who think that way have increased among the upper members of the Tamers’ Guild, too. While this guild still has me, strong familiars suited for transportation gather here, so those who think that way won’t be going anywhere soon. A tamer’s skill shouldn’t be determined by just the strength of their monster and rank, so it is quite saddening to see.”

The conversation went a little off-topic, but it was apparently possible to raise your rank with research achievements. However, whenever you ranked up, that information would be sent to the capital along with the reason why. A review would be held to see if the promotion was legitimate, and an investigation would be held if it was determined otherwise. Furthermore, because of the trend mentioned earlier, slime-related information wasn’t taken very seriously. Thus, even if the big slime information was approved, there was a high chance of no promotion. Even if a promotion was approved, it wouldn’t be a high enough position to act as any control. In which case, announcing the results of my research would just be selling my name half-heartedly, creating more trouble than it solved. It might be better to give up...

“It seems like things have changed quite a bit here since my time.”

“That’s the changing of the times for you. One or two of the veterans retired, so younger faces started appearing among the upper management. Accompanying that was the change in opinion towards monsters. Ah, I shouldn’t say any more than that or I’d just be complaining. For now, let’s go ahead with the process. If you’re registered, the food you buy for your familiars will be discounted, and you can also request guidance. Even if you don’t need that, the guild card will act as identity verification, so it wouldn’t hurt to have that. There were no problems with your documents, so all that’s left is to confirm your taming magic. Could you show me the taming skill on your status board, or the familiar you have tamed?”

Eliaria and I displayed the taming skill on our status boards.

“Good. Then, if you could place your status board on this stone plate.”

The stone plate he took out had a rectangular dent, just like the pedestal in the church. Only this time, there was a metal sheet inserted in the dent, and the status board was to be placed on the empty part of the plate. Eliaria went first, followed by me. When I placed my board on the plate, writing appeared on the metal sheet.

“That’s both of you registered. Welcome to the Tamers’ Guild.”

Taylor said, before asking for my circumstances once again, to whatever extent I was willing to reveal. Thus, I told him the same details that I gave the duke’s family.

“...In that case, how about you make your rank at the Tamers’ Guild a long-term goal, and try registering at the Adventurers’ Guild instead? If you could live in isolation for three years in the forest and have the skill to take down numerous black bears, that should be more than enough.”

“I was hoping to leave him in your capable hands, though.”

“I see. Sorry I couldn’t be of help.”

“It’s not your fault. Ryoma will be fine at the Adventurers’ Guild anyway.”

The Adventurers’ Guild didn’t offer services to people who didn’t have the ability to accomplish them either, but that judgment was made entirely based on one’s survival ability and combat power, which meant that shouldn’t be a problem.

“I cannot be of assistance regarding ranks, but you can come to me whenever you’re in a pinch. I will hear you out any time.”

Taylor said in conclusion, before we headed straight for the Adventurers’ Guild.

Thus, we arrived at the Adventurers’ Guild, where we were immediately harassed by thugs... psyche. That played-out trope didn’t happen, and we received a basic explanation from the receptionist like normal. First of all, the Adventurers’ Guild had eight letter-based ranks, which went from G to A and S at the top. In general, you could only take on jobs of the same rank you had. However, you could form parties or participate in large groups gathered by the guild to lower the difficulty and take on jobs one or two ranks higher.

I also cleared the age restriction of ten years old. But the guild would check your abilities up until you were thirteen, and even if you selected a job at your own rank, the guild would have to approve it first. This was a safety measure to prevent overeager children from being reckless. This limitation was removed at fourteen, after which failing a job became your own responsibility. You would be penalized for breach of the job contract, and potentially even put your own life in danger. Furthermore, if the town was ever in danger, the guild

would send a summons to everyone present in town. Refusing the summons was possible, but doing so required a justifiable reason or large exemption fee. If either option was chosen in favor of inactivity, or an attempt to escape occurred, penalties up to and including guild expulsion could be applied. After receiving the explanation, I had to sit a combat ability test, but...

“I’m meant to go all-out?”

“Let’s see... it would be better to use all your strength here, to show your true abilities.”

“Indeed. That would be for the best.”

“If anything happens, we’ll back you up.”

“Please do your best!”

“Don’t worry, just run free.”

Everyone encouraged me with their opinions at a corner of the training arena the guild prepared. The receptionist and one other person — a muscled man with tough-looking face — entered the training arena.

“You the applicant for today?”

“Yes, I’m Ryoma Takebayashi. It’s nice to meet you.”

“Right. Those your chaperons?”

“That’s right. Pleased to meet you.”

“You’re free to watch, but I ask that you don’t interfere with the exam.”

“Of course.”

With that, the man turned back to me.

“So a bow’s your pick. All right, let’s begin. First, you have five shots to hit those five targets over there. One arrow per target.”

He pointed out five targets that were lined in a simple row. I followed his directions to stand before a line and aimed at the targets. Placing my feet as wide as my shoulders, I nocked my arrow, drew the string, and aimed. There were no hesitations to my movements, and I smoothly fired one arrow after another while changing targets. Without panicking, without fuss.

After making my shots quietly, five arrows were sticking into the center of the targets. My skills with the bow had increased significantly after coming to this world. I used to do it in the past, but I was nowhere near this swift in my past life. Incidentally, the style I followed wasn’t of modern archery, but the ancient Japanese way of the bow, which didn’t require pausing in movements unlike the eight stages of shooting in modern archery. I could stop midway if needed, but the archery taught in my family was about how swiftly and accurately you could shoot a target. In the past, if I paused even for a moment, my father’s fists and yells would come flying at me. Such recollections came to my mind after firing the arrows, but I

remembered I was mid-exam and immediately looked back at the supervisor. He was already walking towards the targets to inspect them all, before he returned.

“Bullseye on all of them. Though they weren’t moving targets, you did good. Next are the moving targets, look at the wall over there.”

The man pointed to the wall opposite the entrance with his thick finger. Part of the wall was a pillar, and along the pillar was a trench-like hole.

“That’s a magic training tool for projectiles that an adventurer named Kengo designed long ago. He was famous for using a magic weapon called a shotgun.”

Um, hello? That was absolutely an otherworlder. He brought a shotgun to a world with swords and magic?

“He stopped at rank C because he became unable to use his magic weapon, but he lived pretty comfortably for the rest of his life, thanks to this invention of his. That’s how valuable this tool is for training, you know?”

Unable to use his weapon? Did his gun break, or did he run out of bullets? He must have pissed Gain and the others off, didn’t he?! Otherwise, he would have received the ability to restore his weapon and shells... If he’d shown basic decency, they would have granted him that kind of support easily... But while those thoughts crossed my mind, the explanation continued.

“Targets will fly out of the hole in the pillar, you just have to shoot at them. Fifty targets will fly out, and the number of arrows you have is fifty. Your grade depends on how many you can drop.”

So basically, it was clay pigeon shooting with a bow and arrow...

“I understand.”

“Right. My whistle will be the signal. Do your best.”

Having said that, the man handed me a quiver and backed away while I held my bow at the ready and awaited the signal.

Chapter 1 Episode 13: After the Exam

Immediately after Ryoma had finished firing at five targets...

Out of the observers, only Eliaria was excited, while the remaining four had been rendered speechless by Ryoma's skills.

"That's amazing! Isn't it, Father?!"

"Y-Yeah..."

"I thought bows were to be aimed slow and steady, but he could fire it quite fast."

Sebas and Reinbach hurriedly corrected Eliaria's words.

"No, My Lady. That is a result of Master Ryoma's ability, and not something a normal bowman can do. Although I'm sure anyone with a bow could move that fast if they weren't aiming."

"Elia, you mustn't use Ryoma as a yardstick to measure basic skill. It's impossible to achieve such accuracy and speed at the same time for the average person. Few people in the army would be capable of such a thing."

"Really? Ryoma's amazing!"

"He certainly is, but..."

"It seems like we may have underestimated Ryoma's abilities a little."

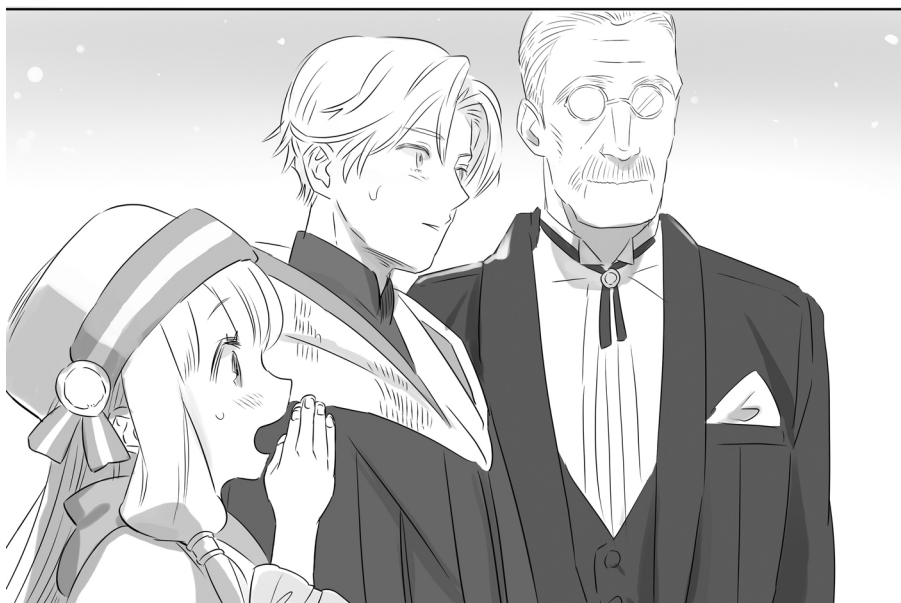
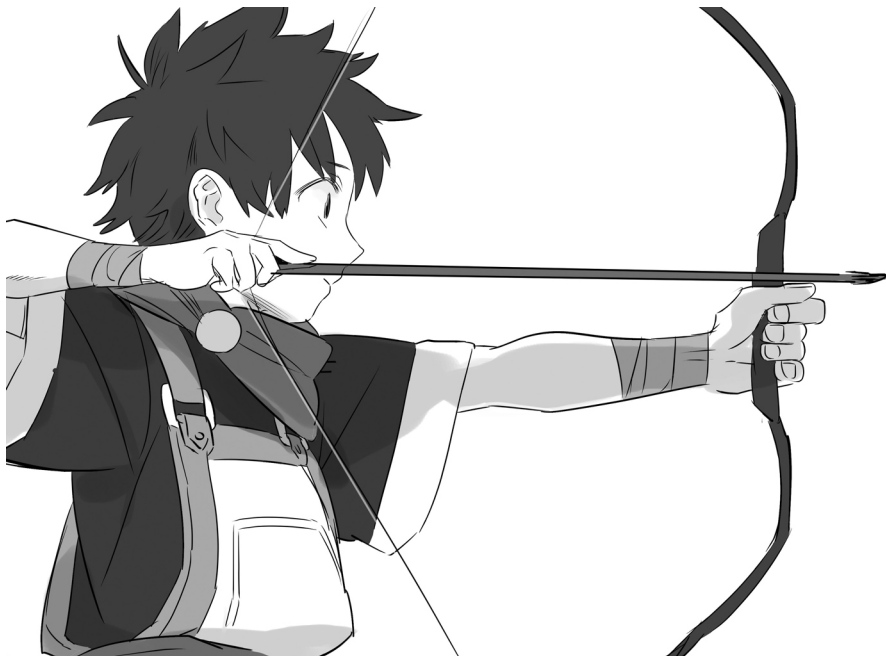
Ryoma himself wasn't aware of it, but his training in his previous life, combined with his battle experience in this one, had increased his abilities beyond that of a regular human.

After the exam on unmoving targets, there was the exam on mock clay pigeon shooting. Ryoma stood at the designated line with his bow raised, facing the wall opposite to Eliaria and the others, so neither they nor the examiner could see Ryoma's expression. His concentration was focused to its limit and there was no sign of impatience, nerves, nor excitement or overenthusiasm in his demeanor. He was the picture of serenity, his emotions completely suppressed as he faced straight forward. While his appearance was youthful, he was a man toughened over nearly 40 years of his previous life. As a result of that, his concentration was wasted on daily activities a lot, but it was vital to when he was doing repetitive and simple tasks. Even Ryoma's old colleagues and superiors who treated him badly acknowledged that part of him, encouraging him as a working machine when convenient for themselves.

But that wasn't where Ryoma originally excelled the most in concentration. Ryoma made the most use of his power when practicing the martial arts he had been learning from childhood. He repeated the same forms every day, letting the techniques seep into his body, until he was able to move so naturally and flowingly it was like breathing for him. His body could already move the way he wanted, and with his mind free, he could get the most out of his techniques. That was Ryoma's true power, and the talent he had in his past life. Forced to blend in to his surroundings and suppress himself, he was unable to use the power and techniques he had developed, or others would fear him. The laws and common sense of Earth no longer applied to Ryoma here, in this other world. Now that he had been freed from the shackles of his past life, there was nothing to hold back Ryoma's power.

The examiner blew the whistle and a target flew out of the right pillar. Ryoma fired an arrow at the target's trajectory and dropped it to the ground. When the next target came out of the left pillar, Ryoma fired another arrow that struck it to the ground. Though there was variation in which direction they were coming from, his task was all the same. Using his long years of training, he saw through the trajectory of the flying targets and simply kept firing arrows. Rinse and repeat.

Gradually, the trajectory of the target changed speeds and intervals, increasing the difficulty. But Ryoma adapted to that. When multiple targets came flying out at once, he would first release one shot and grab another arrow and fire the next with rapid speed, just before it disappeared through the other side. The final shot was four simultaneous targets, at which Ryoma released all four arrows held between his fingers at once, striking all the targets accurately in a single breath, signaling the end of the exam.





Ryoma's Side

Phew...!

"...! Earth Needle!"

Just as I finished the exam and lowered my bow, a knife came flying from behind me. Reflexively, I caught it between my fingers and threw it back at the examiner.

"Tch!"

In the time the man took to deflect it, I threw away my bow and used Earth Needle. I broke the thin piece of stone that grew in front of me at the base and braced it like a makeshift lance.

"Stop! My bad, my bad. That's the end of the exam. You passed the first, second, and third tests, so please put that dangerous thing away."

"..."

I couldn't feel any hostility from the man. It seemed like the knife thrown just now was part of the test. With my guard still up, I destroyed the makeshift lance with Break Rock.

"Sorry. The knife just now was meant to be a warning I use against all bow examinees. Many of them let themselves forget their surroundings when focusing on the targets. It's to tell them that if this was the forest and my knife was a monster, they'd be dead. Most of them argue back that this is an exam situation, while others accept it and thank me. Some barely manage to evade it, but this is the first time I've been counterattacked by someone your age. I have no complaints about your bow skills, and won't place any limits on you. Feel free to take whatever jobs are available at your rank."

Looking closely at the fallen knife, I could see its point was rounded with no edge at all. It really was part of the test... or rather, just this man's interference, so I lowered my guard and thanked him.

"Thank you very much."

"No probs. I look forward to your growth. Don't push yourself too hard, though. I'm Worgan, guildmaster of the Adventurers' Guild in Gimul. Nice to meet you."

This man was the guildmaster?!

"It's nice to meet you. So, you were the guildmaster."

"Huh? Well, duh."

The man shot a sidelong glance at the five people accompanying me.

"I don't know what the reason is, but I can't leave someone

accompanied by the duke's people to anyone else."

I see... that made sense.

"I see your point."

"No really, why is the whole of the duke's family with you?"

"I ran into Lord Reinhart by coincidence while I was hunting in the forest, and two weeks later I ended up being invited to travel with them."

"Just what kind of situation is that..."

"Excuse me for interrupting. If the examination is over, may we hear the results?" Sebas cut into our conversation and spoke up. Upon closer inspection, Eliaria was also waiting for the results nervously.

"Pardon the delay. He passed with flying colors and will have no request limits placed on him. There seem to be no problems with his abilities."

"Then congratulations are in order, Master Ryoma."

"Congratulations, Ryoma!"

Eliaria came running over and took my arm, making me dance in circles. She sure expressed her happiness with her entire being... I couldn't help but feel happy too.

"My Lady, please let go of Master Ryoma. There are still procedures he needs to complete."

"Oh! That's right, he does..."

"Thank you very much, Sebas."

After that, I was led to a separate room... or rather, the guildmaster's own office to complete my registration into the Adventurers' Guild.

"Now, Ryoma. Like I said before, the fact you won't be limited will be recorded on this guild card. With this, you'll be able to accept jobs of the same rank as yourself, but I'd like you to take due care nonetheless."

"Yes, I'll do my best."

"Ability-wise, you would have been fine to start from rank E... But going overboard from the start may mean the others will antagonize you. I'm sure you'll be able to steadily work your way up from G rank."

"Thank you for your consideration."

When I tried to bow my head, Worgan stopped me with a shake of his hand.

"Ah, stop that. You don't have to use such polite words with me. It's too bothersome. So anyway, who did you learn archery from? An elf?"

"My grandfather. He was a dwarf, not an elf."

"A dwarf, huh... it's rare to find a bow-wielding dwarf, but as a species they're very dexterous. There are still masters at archery

among them, though not as many as elves... Well, whatever. Your registration is complete. All that's left is this."

The guildmaster held a letter out to me.

"What's this?"

"An introduction letter to a blacksmith I know. Based on your actions after I deflected the knife, you can use spears too, right? The blacksmith also has stock from outside sources, so there's quite a range of items. Go find a weapon that suits yourself there. They don't specialize in armor, but there'll still be some decent stuff. It'd be better than buying at an unknown store."

That was something I was honestly grateful for.

"Thank you very much. I will go when I need new equipment."

I thanked the guildmaster and left the room.

The day was getting dark, so after meeting up with the others who had been waiting in another room, we all headed back to the inn, where I remembered something.

"Come to think of it, Sebas. You can buy stone material for crafting statues at this inn, right?"

"Yes, you can. Are you going to craft something again?"

"Actually, I received a protection from a god I had never prayed to before during the baptism today. I was thinking of making a statue for him."

"I see. May I inquire as to whose protection you received?"

"Yes, the status board said it was the Protection of Tekun, God of Wine."

"Tekun, the God of Wine... it's rare for a human to receive that protection. On top of being the God of Wine, Tekun is also the God of Craft. He's generally the god that the dwarves worship. Does that ring any bells?"

"My grandfather who took me in was a dwarf. And I did a little blacksmithing to help my grandfather as well."

It was an excuse I had agreed on with Gain and the other gods, which Sebas seemed to accept.

"I see, that must be the reason. Something back then must have triggered Tekun's interest in Master Ryoma. Although I do wonder why it wasn't the Protection of the God of Craft..."

"The Protection of the God of Craft?"

"Tekun has two types of protection he can bestow, one as the God of Craft and one as the God of Wine. The effect of each protection is different. The Protection of the God of Craft accelerates skills like blacksmithing, making it easier to create good items. The Protection of the God of Wine prevents you from getting drunk or hung-over. It also brings fated encounters with good alcohol, increasing your chance of obtaining them. While people will be envious of this protection,

there's no particular issue in revealing it."

"Is that so..."

"We've gone off-topic, but you wanted stone materials for crafting a statue of Tekun, is that correct?"

Sebas asked, reaching into his Item Box and taking out the stone block I created from the landslide dirt.

"This is..."

"The stone material that Master Ryoma made. You will need money when in town, and there were a large number of these of a consistent size. I brought them along thinking they could be sold and added to Master Ryoma's funds. And Master Ryoma seems like the type to refuse assistance from anyone else."

"Thank you for going out of your way to do this."

"Not at all. As for the statue, it's said that Tekun does not enjoy wastefully extravagant things. It would be best to make a statue with sincerity and delicacy. I also heard that it is good to offer alcohol before the statue. You can purchase an image of Tekun through the inn, along with alcohol."

"Then I shall do just that."

I went with Sebas to the inn worker and told them what we wanted, only to be informed that a rare high-quality alcohol called Keromi's Tears had just been stocked. I was only going to buy three bottles to use as an offering, but seeing the change in Sebas's eyes, I decided to purchase two barrels instead. Apparently, it was a favorite brand of Reinbach that only produced a certain amount of stock each year, so it was very difficult to obtain. Sebas thanked me with a wide smile, saying that it was all because of my protection. Could it be that Sebas loved this brand, too...?

After that, I returned to the room and created the statue, setting up the offering before having a meal, cleaner slime bath, and went to sleep. Thus ended my first day in Gimul Town.

Chapter 1 Episode 14: First Job in Town

The next day, I went to the Adventurers' Guild alone.

The ducal house informed me that they had business with the governor at the public office today, so I ended up going on my own. Elise told me it was fine if I wanted to stay in the inn instead of wandering the town alone, but I figured I had registered for the guild already, so I'd go and do my first job instead. Maybe something like gathering herbs, to be safe?

I shifted the specially crafted basket backpack (with slimes inside) over my shoulders and looked at the job requests pasted on the G rank bulletin board. There was an interesting and wide range of jobs, from gathering herbs to cleaning and assisting in moving houses. At first, I thought about gathering herbs, but apparently those were accepted once the herbs were brought in. In which case, I could just do it on the way back from another job.

And so, while I was searching for jobs other than herb collecting, two particular job requests stood out to me from the mountain of other forms stuck on the board. They involved cleaning a house and the communal toilets of the town. House aside, the communal toilets could be done with the magic I previously devised with the scavenger slimes. I should ask the receptionist for more details.

"Excuse me, could I ask a question?"

"Welcome, how can I help?"

"Could you tell me some more details about the two requests over there?"

"Which ones? Ah... those requests. Quite some time has passed since those two requests were first posted. They only involve cleaning, but they're so smelly and dirty no one wants to do it. And the matter of area..."

"Is it a wide space?"

"Extremely so. First, for the house cleaning request: This client's house is next to a landfill. The client didn't like it either, but it made the house cheap, so they bought it anyway. Several months after the purchase the basement wall separating the house from the landfill collapsed, leading to all the rubbish flooding into the basement. Now the smell has permeated through the whole house, and they're desperate. Even if it's cleaned up, the rubbish will keep piling in if the

wall isn't fixed, but the wall can't be fixed unless the rubbish is gone — it's an endless circle, as you can see.

"The communal toilets are meant to be cleaned by the public office hiring people living in the slums, but there was a problem with their payment, so they refused it. No one's cleaned it out since then, and that was three months ago. There were so many complaints about the smell, it was given to the guild."

She explained it to me kindly, but the details were awful. No, the word "awful" was hardly sufficient to summarize it.

"Rather than the complaints, the bigger concern should be disease... for both of them."

"Oh my, you're very knowledgeable. Well done! That's exactly right. They say that plague and disease lurk in unclean places, after all. That's why something needs to be done, but no one will take the jobs..."

"Exactly how large is the area?"

"The house is 200 square meters, and the communal toilet cesspits are 7 meters wide, 2 kilometers from entrance to end, with 30 cubicles in total. The communal toilets are counted per cubicle."

"And the contents of the garbage? I know what to expect from the toilets."

"Most of it is household garbage, the rest is plant material and wood waste."

In that case, the scavenger slimes could eat it.

"I see. In that case, may I take the request for the house?"

"Huh?! You'll take it?!"

"Yes, I happen to have a spell that's rather helpful for cleaning. It requires a bit more magic energy, so it doesn't seem like many people use it, though."

"I see! Then please, take out your card. There's no time limit to it, but you'll be fined for abandoning the job."

"I understand."

The receptionist was either extremely passionate about her job, or serious when she said that no one would take it. She got everything ready in a flash, taking my guild card and wrapping up the formalities so I could head to the client's house. The client's house was located in eastern of Gimul Town, in the cheaper residential area. All the buildings in the vicinity were rather old. My destination house was also a worn-down brick house.

I knocked on the door. There was no response... I knocked again... But there was still no answer. Were they away...? I tried knocking once more, this time calling out loud too.

"Excuse me! I've come from the Adventurers' Guild to fill your cleaning request!"

The moment I shouted that, the great thumping of someone running on creaking floorboards could be heard before the door burst open.

“Are you really here to clean, nya?!”

“!”

The woman who came out was a cat beastkin with ears on her head and a tail. I was aware of their existence and got a glimpse of some at the guild, but this was my first time interacting with a beastkin in the flesh. My mood was lifted with elation... it was unfortunate that my first interaction with a beastkin had to be over the tremendous stench of raw garbage. But... as a former Japanese person, I wouldn't let my business smile slip!

“Yes, I'm Ryoma Takebayashi, the adventurer dispatched by the guild. Would you be the client?”

“That's right! You really came to clean up, nya?! I had nearly given up!”

“Then, please confirm the request form is correct.”

“Yup, yup! There's no mistake here, nya! I'm the client, Miya! Thank you so much for coming, nya!”

“You should save the gratitude for after the job's done.”

“Uhh... Unyaaah!”

She's crying?!



I had been trying to talk to her normally, but Miya suddenly burst into tears after looking over the request form multiple times. ...Wh-What should I do?

“H-Hey. Let’s calm down, shall we?”

“Sorry, nya... I’m just... so happy... All the adventurers who came here were always unhappy and full of complaints... They all went home partway, nya... Sometimes they couldn’t even stand the smell at the front door and just left right away... It’s my first time seeing someone as motivated as you, nya...”

No, those adventurers should have tried a little harder. It’d be one thing if they got sick, but leaving at the front door was a little...

“I’d like to get to work right away, it’s in the basement right?”

“Yup. But what are you gonna do, nya?”

“I was told the garbage was kitchen waste and plant material. In which case, I have a convenient spell that can deal with it.”

“Is that true, nya?”

“Yes. It expends a lot of magic energy, so few people use it, but it exists. And I have my familiars too.”

“Oh, you’re a tamer, nya? Well... as long as you make it clean for me, anything’s fine. I’ll leave you right to it, nya.”

“Understood. Just to confirm, but there isn’t anything you need to keep from the basement, is there?”

“Nope, I never used the basement for storage, nya. Even if I did, I’d rather throw anything buried under all that garbage away, nya.”

Well, unless it was something extremely important, most people would do the same with all that raw waste for such a long period of time. But it was all the better for me.

“In that case, this should be over fairly quick. A complete disposal of the basement is fine with you?”

“That’s fine by me, nya. I’m counting on you!”

“Then I shall commence my work. Where is the entrance to the basement?”

“This way, nya.”

Miya led me to a staircase that continued downstairs. I descended to find a door at the bottom that opened to a mountain of garbage with flies buzzing about. I proceeded to close the door and take out a huge scavenger slime from my basket, throwing it inside the door. After closing the door once more, I ordered them to split apart, filling the room with slimes from floor to ceiling. Flies would gather around the slimes if they released a little stench, so they could immediately feed on those. Apparently scavenger slimes found them delicious. All the work after that involved having the scavenger slimes eat all the raw garbage they could, but to an onlooker it would seem like I was

slacking off, so I hid myself with a stealth barrier. Just because.

Then, around twenty minutes of waiting later. The scavenger slimes informed me that they had eaten their way to the floor, so I finally entered the room myself. It was much better than when I started, but it was still smelly. And, exactly like the guild had described, there was a hole in the wall where new garbage was falling through. It seemed like this house was built on a slope with the landfill above it, so it was like the house was holding back the garbage from sliding down the slope. Just who would build a house in a place like this... Not to mention the foundation on the other side of the wall also seemed rather weak, as though it had been dug up to bury the garbage. But well, if it was like this it'd be easier to let all the garbage be eaten completely.

“Miya.”

“Ah... What is it, nya?”

“The source of the garbage in the basement is from the left of your house, right?”

“The landfill? That’s right, nya.”

“I’m going to go over to the landfill to prevent more garbage from flowing in. Let me know if you need anything.”

With a word to the client, I went outside and deployed my slimes in the landfill.

“.....”

“It’s a slime!”

“Y-Yes, so it seems...”

...A mother and child passing by gave me a skeptical look. I should put my stealth barrier up here too, just in case. There was nothing illegal about a tamer being out and about with their slime familiars, but some people may find it unpleasant.

For the record, the stealth barrier was a type of barrier magic that used dark elemental energy to create an effect that allowed those within the barrier to be harder to notice, resulting in things like accidentally passing a turn you were supposed to make. Come to think of it, I used to pass by the front of my house a lot back when I first started learning to use it. I thought about such things as I helped the slimes, and in roughly an hour the landfill was all eaten up.

...I wondered how their bodies were holding up. Slimes weren’t particularly big eaters, if anything only eating as much as they were fed. But at any rate, the garbage was gone now. And the wall was still dirty, so it was my turn to work. I returned to the basement and ordered my scavenger and cleaner slimes. I had them spray deodorant solution inside and outside of the basement walls, removing the smell from the walls before I washed it all with water.

“Mist Wash.”

Water made from water magic was compressed and sprayed like a pressure washer. Back when I was researching magic in the forest, I failed to recreate a high-pressure water jet cutter; but noticed that the dirt had been removed from the target rock and figured it could be used as a type of cleaning magic instead. It could take down the most stubborn of stains, but using it required a constant stream of magic energy, so cleaning one room would expend a lot of energy. A benefit was that it could be continuously used with constant magic output, but that made it hard for people with less magic energy to use.

“All right, that should do it.”

The dirt on the walls was all washed off. I fed the dirty leftover water to the scavenger slimes, so there was no problem there. The next issue after obtaining a clean room was the hole in the wall. It wasn't right to just leave it like this, so I guess I'd fill it with whatever I could. I used Create Block with the dirt outside to make stone blocks. Then once again to make the hole in the wall square. All that was left was to use the sticky slime's hardening sticky solution as cement to fill the hole... with the help of the slimes, my work was done in 20 minutes.

Once I had done everything I could, I got the cleaner slimes to give it a final polish before putting all the slimes away in my basket and heading to Miya.

“Miya.”

“Nya?! You changed back to the same clothes as when you arrived... Wh-What's wrong, nya...? Don't tell me, you're giving up...”

“Well, I am stopping... because I'm done, that is.”

“...Nya? Err, what?”

It'd be faster just to show her. I led a confused Miya down to the basement. When Miya looked around the room, her jaw dropped to the floor.

“Nya... Wh-What did you do, nya?!”

“Cleaning.”

“Amazing, nya! You really cleaned it all! Even though everyone gave up because all the garbage kept pouring in! You even fixed the hole, nya?! ”

“I couldn't let the garbage flow in again, so I used earth magic to make stone blocks and filled it. The difference with the surrounding stones is a little harsh, so if it's ugly I can remove it...”

“No need, nya! I don't mind it, and I would have called a construction company to fill it after the cleaning anyway. That's why I'm more grateful than anything, nya.”

“I see, in that case... Would you consider the job completed?”

“Of course, nya. You did such a good job and even fixed the wall;

I'll have to increase your reward!"

"Thank you very much."

Miya signed the completion confirmation on the request form with a smile. With that, the job was completed. All that was left was to take the signed job form to the guild reception and receive payment. Miya saw me off with words of gratitude as I headed to the guild with light footsteps, filled with the feeling of accomplishment and relief that I had safely completed my first job in this town.

Chapter 1 Episode 15: From a Good Job to the Next Job

When I returned to the guild, the receptionist who explained the job to me earlier was still working.

“Excuse me.”

“Oh, you’re the one from this morning...”

“I came to report a successful job.”

“Huh? Successful? Barely 3 hours have passed since you accepted it... you’re not abandoning it?”

“It’s completed.”

I handed in the request form as proof.

“...Wow, you really did complete it. And you even received a bonus reward. Pretty impressive. This wasn’t a difficult task, but the smell was terrible and many people gave up when the garbage kept pouring in from the hole.”

“I was just fortunate to have just the right magic for it.”

“Well, thank you for your hard work. Let me just finish filling the success report... Okay, here’s your reward of 30 medium silvers.”

The receptionist placed a coin dish with the silver coins before me. Hm? That’s a lot more than what was written on the request form...

“I know you said there was a bonus, but isn’t this too much?”

“People stopped attempting the job, so the client — Miya — raised the reward to entice people. There’s an order for a bonus on top of that, so this amount is correct.”

“Oh, okay then.”

“Also, the guildmaster has asked you to visit his office upon your return; could you follow me?”

“The guildmaster?”

The one who answered my question wasn’t the woman before me, but the man at the next counter doing his paperwork.

“Don’t sweat it, it’s no big deal. Just the usual.”

“What do you mean? Ah... I’m Ryoma Takebayashi.”

“I’m Jeff Grange. That old man, frequently, likes to stick his nose in other people’s business, particularly those of newbies and under-thirteen adventurers like you. He looked after me when I was a newbie too. His mug might look more like your average thug, but there’s no need to fear him.”

“I see. Thank you very much.”

“No probs.”

Immediately after that, a voice called out to us from behind the counter.

“That’s right, you don’t need to be thanking him.”

“Ah, Guildmaster.”

“Geh! It’s the old man.”

“Who takes one look at a person’s face and goes ‘geh’?! And I don’t look like a thug, damn it!”

“Anyone who sees your face would see a thug!”

“Shut up! I can’t help my rough facial structure! But I don’t have the crooked look of a thug!”

“If a girl saw you walking the streets at night she’d run away screaming...”

“Guh... The people of this town wouldn’t!”

“That’s ‘cause they’re used to you already!”

“Gwuh! Enough... Ryoma, follow me.”

Jeff’s words stabbed into the guildmaster, who held his chest as he retreated into the back room while calling for me.

I said goodbye to Jeff and the receptionist before following the guildmaster.

The room I was led to was the same guildmaster’s office as yesterday.

“Sit anywhere you like. And what is that basket? It sticks out like a sore thumb.”

“I’m sorry, my familiars are in this basket.”

“Oh, you’re a tamer? I totally thought you were a hunter or something.”

“My familiars are just slimes, and I’m still an apprentice tamer. I guess that makes me a hunter who can use taming magic? I like to make use of sticky slimes to make traps, and poison slimes to dip the tips of my arrows in.”

The guildmaster grinned at that.

“...You sure came up with some dirty combinations.”

“You think so? They’re just slimes, though.”

“I’ve been through it myself, so I know. It’d be one thing if it were regular slimes, but advanced ones can’t be underestimated. Many adventurers lump regular slimes with their advanced species. Well, in reality, most of the advanced slimes are still weak, but if you get hit by an acid slime’s acid, your armor will break down. If the battle prolongs, new equipment will be in tatters by the time you go home. Taking the poison directly would also be a risk to your life, and sticky slimes are a nuisance, but if another monster comes while you’re stuck you can consider your life over. Adventurers who have had those

kinds of encounters with slimes think of them as anything but weak. If they had such an encounter and still think that way, well... the next time the same thing happens, they'll be heading upstairs instead. That's the kind of business this is."

"I see... then the Adventurers' Guild sounds easy to work in. Actually, I was told at the Tamers' Guild that using slimes would make others deem me useless."

"I've heard about that from the old gramps over there many times now. So that's why you came here, huh?"

"Yes, it is. Slimes aren't suited for labor work, so I was searching for jobs here that didn't require brute strength."

Worgan nodded in understanding as I explained.

"I see... Right, we were here to discuss work. I heard you accepted your first job today, and it went well?"

"Yes, the client was satisfied with the result. I even received a bonus."

"Wow, well done for your first job. I only heard it was a cleaning job, which one did you take?"

"I cleaned the house of the client called Miya."

When the guildmaster heard that, his eyes widened.

"You went and cleaned her house?"

"Do you know of it?"

"Why, Miya's an adventurer of this town, after all. She comes to the guild often and I see her here."

"I see."

"But... if you completed that request, then that means you cleaned it, right?"

"Yes."

"I didn't think anyone would ever clean that house... how did you do it?"

"I knew just the right magic for the job. It uses a lot of magic energy so it's difficult to handle, which is why it doesn't seem to be known much among the general public."

"Really now... Then, there's another job I would like you to take..."

Could that be...

"Do you mean the request to clean the communal toilets in town?"

"Oh what, you know about it already?"

"Yes, I was hesitating between the two this morning."

"Great, that makes things simple. The public office put in a cleaning request at the guild, then told the residents it was the guild's fault it wasn't cleaned yet. Now all the complaints come to us. Even though they were the ones originally cheaping out on paying the guys from the slums."

"I heard that from the receptionist, but is it really true?"

"Yeah, it is. You know how the town's income has fallen these last few years?"

"I heard the output from the mines hasn't been as good."

"That's right, that's why the public office is trying to reduce their expenses... By mostly cutting the budget for town maintenance, shifting the consequences onto the townspeople."

Apparently, the brunt of it was taken by the people in the slums. The public office had been gradually reducing their employee numbers until now, but that left them understaffed. And so, when all the work piled up was left unfinished, they blamed the employees for not working properly and reduced their payments by force. After the residents started to complain about this, they started hiring again in large numbers. But this time, they gave the prejudiced reason that 'people from the slums don't work seriously' and offered much less pay, ultimately resulting in no one from the slums accepting the work.

"No matter how strapped you are for cash, not even the guys from the slums will work for no pay. They're not even asking for a large amount of money. It's just... those guys are living in poverty, so if they get a disease, the treatment will be a huge burden on them. There's too much risk involved to work for practically nothing."

Well... that was certainly true.

"I understand, I'll make preparations to take it on as soon as possible. Perhaps tomorrow, at the earliest."

"That would be a great help, thanks. There'll be a handsome reward waiting."

"Thank you."

I should try and have a word with Reinhart too. They were the people with the most influence, and they'd probably ask what I did today anyway. Once they knew about this, they'd probably act accordingly.

"...Penny for your thoughts, kid."

Did it show on my face right now?

"Nothing, I was just thinking about how I acted on my own today, so the people who accompanied me to the registration yesterday might ask about my day... or something."

When the guildmaster heard that, he grinned once again. Jeff's words certainly came to mind when he made such a wicked face...

"You're a pretty amicable chap, aren't you... Do you think they'll make a move?"

"I believe they'd do something once they know about it."

"On what basis?"

"I don't really have a basis. It's just that I'm an orphan, and I was living in the forest with nowhere else to go when I ran into them by

coincidence. They've looked after me in many aspects since then. A stranger like me, you know? I understand they can't treat each and every person in the slums the same way, but I'm sure they're not people who would be emotionless about it if they knew."

"...I see. I'll look forward to the result."

"Yes. Then... could I take my leave for today? I need to prepare for tomorrow as well."

"Of course, I'm leaving that to you. I'll tell them to prioritize you for the job once you get here. Though no one else would even consider touching it."

"Right?"

We laughed over that, then I left the guild for the inn. On my way back, I searched for a store that sold cheap fabric and a sewing kit to purchase. I also bought myself an empty spool.

Chapter 1 Episode 16: In Order to Do a Better Job

Back at the inn room, I gathered my purchases and got to work.

First, I coated the fabric with the sticky solution of the sticky slime and used a spell called Dryer which combined the wind magic Breeze and fire magic Flame to mass produce waterproof fabric. If I lost control of Dryer, the wind would fan the fire until fierce flames would engulf everything. That in itself was usable as a fire launching an attack spell, which I named Flamethrower — but I had to take care not to do that here. Because of that, it took until the afternoon before I was done.

While using two magics of the same element was easy, controlling magics of different elements was quite tough... well, that went without saying.

Next, I had a sticky slime spit out its string and coiled it around the spool.

The strength of a sticky slime's string varied depending on the ratio of sticky solution to hardening solution, making it easy to adjust for my purposes. For example, using a ratio of 7:3 sticky to hardening solution resulted in a soft thread for fine sewing, while a 6:4 ratio made a sturdy string. A 5:5 ratio would make a flexible string that could be used in traps while letting people and bigger animals go, while a 4:6 ratio was strong enough to strangle large beasts.

When I was researching the strength of the 4:6 ratio string in the forest, I tied several threads across some trees and lured a black bear into charging at it. The strings withstood one hit, and the black bear's body was covered in small wounds from the thread. At the time, I realized this could be used for a fairly dangerous trap and sealed it in a panic. Since then, I haven't used it on anything other than huge spawns of monsters like goblins. One exception was when adjusting the thickness of the strings on the guitar I tried to make in imitation of the one in my past life. While it was strong, it wasn't so sharp that it would cut into my fingers, so there may be more use for it with further investigation in the future. Doing simple tasks sure made old memories resurface... Oh, I was done coiling the 6:4 ratio string.

Next up was cutting the fabric. I carefully cut it into multiple parts. My goal was to make clothes resembling work overalls with rubber boots as per my past life. Since I was going to be cleaning pit

toilets tomorrow, even if I could leave most of the work to the scavenger slimes and use the cleaner slimes to cleanse myself afterward, I didn't want to go in my regular clothes. It would be best to make some preparations in advance. Just as I finished the long boots, someone knocked on the door.

"Master Ryoma, I heard that you returned. Are you inside?"

It was Sebas, so I hurried to open the door.

"I'm here."

"Is everything all right?"

"As far as I'm aware, yes."

"I see. The inn worker told me you left in the morning, returned before noon, then shut yourself away in the room without even having lunch..."

Ah... Come to think of it, I forgot to eat.

"Sorry, I was concentrating on work... Did I worry you?"

"If you have the time, please come and join us. My Lady is most eager to see you again. If your work is that needlework, you can continue it in My Lady's room, and have the two maids help you."

I was planning on going to talk to them anyway, so this was perfect timing. Putting the fabric and tools away in my Item Box, I headed for the duke family's room with my slimes. Once Sebas and I arrived, Eliaria and Elise immediately drew near.

"Are you unharmed?! Did anything happen?!"

"Ryoma! Are you okay? Were you hurt at all?"

"Calm down, you two."

"If you press so closely Ryoma won't be able to speak."

Reinhart's and Reinbach's words made the two of them back away.

"Umm... Sorry for worrying you. I'd like to say there weren't any particular problems, but... I got a little too into my work and forgot to eat lunch."

"Oh, that's a relief."

"Goodness, I thought something had happened!"

"Ho ho, if nothing happened then it's for the best."

"What were you working on?"

"Sewing. I was making work clothes for cleaning."

I took out my tools from the Item Box.

"Hmm... It looks like you've made it all waterproof as well."

"Yes, it took me from the end of my job today until the afternoon. I've been putting together the clothes until now."

"Why did you suddenly decide to make such clothes?"

I explained what happened today. They said they didn't mind if I worked while talking, so I did just that.

"...And so, I ended up accepting that cleaning request. It would be

terrible if disease were to spread, so I was hurrying to complete my work.”

“Hmm...”

“I understand your reasoning. And I am very grateful to you too. But to hear that the public office of this town has done such a thing. Sebas...”

“Yes.”

“Head into town and gather information to confirm whether the public office is really doing such things. If true, then the administrative expenses of the town should have fallen from last year. However, the report we received today stated otherwise. It's possible that there is some embezzlement going on.”

“Understood.”

Sebas promptly left the room.

“Thank you, Ryoma. We may yet uncover a crime because of you.”

“Indeed. Embezzlement is already a crime, but taking the money meant for the town and its residents to the point it impacts the lifestyle of the people is unforgivable. The amount to pay the people from the slums was decided decades ago. To cut that lower is unacceptable! Wasting my hard work like that...”

Reinbach's hard work?

“The one who set up the system of employing slum residents to clean the communal toilets was father-in-law, who devised it as a public works project for disease prevention and poverty relief in the Jamil domain.”

“It's in the past now, but I had to contact the governor of each town to make them construct the facilities. If they couldn't believe my order to hire people from the slums, then I had to shake off their attempts to control me and head to the slum areas myself to conduct negotiations. Who knows how long it took to complete negotiations with every town over labor and employment... To think that all that hard work has gone to waste is most vexing indeed.”

Reinbach said with a truly saddened face. He may have had an emotional attachment beyond his work...

“At any rate, if this is true then it cannot be ignored. Even if others turn a blind eye, the Jamil family will not.”

“We are truly grateful to have you here, Ryoma. This way we were able to gain this information while we were in town. At the very least, there is definitely something strange about it. If the system was really operating the way I set it up, then that job request would never have been made.”

“You're very welcome.”

“Hmm, you should get the maids to help you make those clothes.

Araune, Lilian. Lend him a hand.”

“Understood.”

Thanks to the two maids coming to lend a hand, I was able to split my work. Lilian worked on the gloves, Araune did the overalls, and I braided the cords that would be used for various purposes.

“Master Ryoma, what kind of thread is this? I’ve never seen a thread this sturdy yet thin and smooth before.”

“Oh, that’s the string of a sticky slime.”

“Slimes spit out string?”

“Only the sticky slimes. And possibly just mine, at that. I was mixing the slime’s sticky solution and hardening solution to find a use for it when it turned into a string, so I tried to get the slimes to do the same. They were crucial when I needed to mend my clothes in the forest.”

I called a big sticky slime over and made it spit some string out.

“Just like this. The strength of the string can be changed by adjusting the ratio of the two solutions within its body.”

When I made the slime create strings of various thicknesses to show Araune and Lilian, they asked me to sell it to them.

“I couldn’t ask for money. I’ve been in your care so much. Please accept it for free.”

The two of them were very happy when I said that. Apparently, this string was the highest quality thread Araune had ever seen in her many long years of working for the Jamil family in tailoring. I hadn’t considered it to be that special, but I was probably too used to seeing the synthetic fibers made on Earth.

After that, I consulted with Reinhart until it was decided that the thread could be made into a product along with the rain gear.

From further discussion, I found out that the Jamil domain’s towns and villages were considered to be very clean environments thanks to the large-scale maintenance efforts of the previous head, Reinbach. And to further improve the domain that his father had established, Reinhart wanted to develop the trade industry. That’s why the slime products I inadvertently invented were very attractive to him. He bowed his head deeply to ask for my long-standing cooperation, so I did the same in return. The people of the Jamil family were all so nice, I wanted to assist them as much as I could.

We kept working as we chatted until my work clothes were completed. When I tried them on for size, there were no problems, but... I pulled on the gloves and stuck the ends inside my jumpsuit sleeves, tying the ends at my wrist with cord to keep the dirt out. I put on the waterproof work overalls and long boots that reached my body, fastening everything with cord. Everyone gave me the opinion that it looked weird, but seemed to have high functionality for labor, so

Reinhart deemed it another product to possibly consider.

Chapter 1 Episode 17: During the Sanitation Work...

The next day.

I grabbed the clothes I made yesterday, got all my slimes ready, and informed everyone I was going out.

“I’ll be heading out now.”

“Thank you for your work.”

“See you later, Ryoma.”

“Do your best.”

“We’ll figure things out on our end too.”

After everyone saw me off, I went to the guild.

“Good morning.”

“Oh, you’re the boy from yesterday. Ryoma, right? You came again.”

“Yes, I want to take a job request...”

“Yes, so I’ve heard. Thanks for accepting this job. We really were in a tight spot about it.”

“You’re welcome. Please proceed with the paperwork.”

“Right-o, leave it to me... And done! Take this job form and go around the western bloc. This is the key to the cesspit entrance. Don’t lose it.”

“Got it. I will go now.”

“Be safe!”

I left the guild and headed for the western side of Gimul Town, as indicated.

The cesspit of the communal toilets... Ah, there it was. When I opened the door installed onto the brick wall with the key that was entrusted to me, there was a small building made of the same brick with another door. I went through the first door and tried to close it from the inside but found there was no keyhole. It was designed so that it couldn’t be locked from inside, with two layers of doors. Well, I guess I could keep it unlocked. With the closed door behind me, I changed clothes and opened the entrance to the pit.

“Urk?!”

And slammed it shut again. The cesspits had been abandoned for several months and released a tremendous stench. The stimulus to my nose made my eyes water.

The scavenger slimes seemed fine, so I made them go inside first and split themselves to deal with the cleanup, but I couldn't quite shake the shock off. It took me a while to calm down. But once I did, I asked a cleaner slime to soak a handkerchief with deodorant solution and wrapped it around my face to deal with the smell. My eyes had also been affected earlier, so I took one of the slimes and put it on my head, like a pair of goggles. Cleaner slimes had high transparency, so it didn't affect my vision. Hooray for cleaner slimes.

Once I was fully equipped, I entered to see a staircase that led downwards to a vast underground corridor. Both sides of the path were lined with swarms of scavenger slimes, doing their best to clean the piles of filth.



From behind them, I used Mist Wash on the ceiling and walls to wash off the filth and my original lightning spell Squall to heat the dirty water and disinfect it. It was just so dirty, I tried it in hopes it would clean nicely... which seemed to be successful. Initially, the status of the ceiling read:

Unclean Ceiling

Ceiling with filth on it.

But upon using Appraisal, it had changed to:

Stone Ceiling

The cesspit ceiling of the communal toilets in Gimul Town. Cleaned by being disinfected with water and heat.

The information from the appraisal had changed from an unclean ceiling to a stone one. When looking up the details, it stated it had been disinfected through heat. Where did this information come from, anyway? I've always wondered about that, but I guess as long as it wasn't wrong...

I continued cleaning while sometimes paying attention to irrelevant things, ultimately resulting in taking 5 hours to clean 1 cesspit; when something else happened, which added another three hours.

"Well, they have consumed a lot today."

The scavenger slimes were preparing to split themselves. There was still work in the other pits to be done... but considering how it could make working more efficient, I figured it'd be better to let them split themselves. We were already in a place out of the public eye, so the slimes went ahead and split. It took three hours for this to finish. But thanks to that, the number of scavenger slimes increased to a total of 1464. There were 730 slimes before they split, so four of them had split twice. It was a surprise to see how many nutrients they had accumulated, but it made it easier to move on to the next job.

For now, all that was left for today was to make my report. There was no one to demand I hurry like in my past life either. I took my time to leisurely confirm that there was nothing wrong with the slimes. But when I noticed a change in one of the scavenger slime's stats, a cold chill ran down my back.

Before cleaning, their skills were:

Disease Resistance 5, Poison Resistance 5, Foul Feeder 5, Cleanse 6, Deodorize 6, Deodorant Solution 4, Stench Release 4, Nutrient Reduction 3, Jump 2, Consume 6, Absorb 3, Split 6

But now their skills were:

Disease Resistance 7, Poison Resistance 6, Foul Feeder 6, Cleanse 7, Deodorize 7, Deodorant Solution 4, Stench Release 6, Nutrient Reduction 5, Jump 2, Consume 7, Absorb 3, Split 6

Their skills had increased in level across the board. But the most important one was disease resistance. It had increased by 2 levels at once. The others were fine, so there was no problem. But for disease resistance to rise, there had to be a source of disease. In other words, that meant... this place was a breeding ground for diseases!

No, I knew that. It was hard to admit here, but places where filth builds up become hotbeds for disease. But... last time I asked Elise about scavenger slime skills, she told me that disease resistance level 5 gave immunity to pretty much most serious diseases (life-threatening, of course). For it to rise 2 levels from that... there had to be bacteria here that could create an epidemic! This was really bad... Wait, what about the other cesspits?! Oh no, I have to tell someone about this... but first, disinfection! It'd be no joke if I ran out of here and spread the bacteria everywhere!

I returned to the entrance in a hurry while trying to calm myself, then checked on the slimes' condition with Monster Appraisal. Okay, they didn't seem to have any active diseases at this point. First, I had the cleaner slime cleanse the slime basket, slimes, and all of myself. After that, I thoroughly disinfected the area around the entrance and used the neutral magic Appraisal to confirm all my belongings and slimes were clear. I checked for the words 'dirty,' 'unclean,' or 'germs' in the information details. Thankfully they all said 'clean,' so it looked like the cleansing by the cleaner and scavenger slimes was effective.

I locked the entrance and put up a barrier just in case, before rushing to the guild. I attracted a lot of attention on my way to the guild. Since I was in a hurry, I hadn't changed. But now wasn't the time to worry about that. I had to make my report to the guildmaster and ducal house as soon as possible.

That was my only thought as I ran, but I realized something as I neared the guild. If I started ranting about epidemics to the guild receptionist, at best bad rumors would start and at worst great confusion could break out. That's why I should pretend to be a young adventurer on his way back after work...

I dropped my pace to a walk before the guild and stepped inside calmly. Gazes gathered on me for entering the guild with odd clothes, someone even pointing a finger and laughing. But I ignored them and headed for the receptionist. I didn't have time to care for them. It was all I could do to keep my panic from showing.

"Excuse me."

"Oh my, Ryoma... What's that odd outfit?"

"These are my work clothes! What do you think? They're not the most stylish, but they're easy to move in and can get as dirty as needed, so much that I can even wade through a swamp!"

"If you say so..."

Several people around us were also nodding in agreement.

“By the way, I’d like to report today’s job to the guildmaster. Does he have time right now?”

“Huh? The guildmaster?”

“Could you ask the guildmaster for me? Tell him I have something I want to say.”

“Really? Hmm... I’ll ask him, but he’s with some guests right now so you might wait a bit.”

“That’s fine, thank you.”

The receptionist went through to the back and returned a long moment later.

“They said it’s okay, Ryoma. Come on in.”

Luckily, I was able to meet him right away.

But before I reached the guildmaster’s office, the receptionist pulled me aside.

“There are some extremely important people visiting the guildmaster right now, so make sure you act very politely, okay? I doubt I’ll need to worry about you, but just in case, yeah?”

“Thank you for the warning. I’ll be careful.”

Then we arrived at the guildmaster’s office, where the receptionist knocked on the door.

“Excuse me, I’ve brought Ryoma.”

“Come in.”

We followed the guildmaster’s voice inside.

There in the room were the four people of the Jamil family and Sebas.

“Good work, Ryoma.”

“Everyone... why are you here?”

“We came to listen to the guildmaster’s words about what you told us yesterday. All of our escorts have also been sent to gather information.”

“I see...”

It was a little unexpected, but this was convenient!

“And...? What’s the matter?”

“There’s something I’d like you to listen to with confidentiality.”

“Did something happen? And what are those clothes? With your basket from yesterday and clothes today, don’t you think your outfits have grown more and more eccentric?”

“These are work clothes I made for cleaning. They were built for function over fashion, so please look past the clumsy shape... What’s more important right now is that I just came from cleaning the town’s communal toilet cesspit.”

I changed the topic rather forcefully. The guildmaster and ducal house seemed to sense my mood and wore serious expressions to

match.

“Yeah, the thing I told you about yesterday. What about it?”

“My cleaning method is to use water magic and my familiars, the scavenger slimes. Scavenger slimes will eat unclean items like animal excretions and rotten meat, and they possess the skill for cleansing. I’ve been cleaning with this method.”

“I’ve never heard of that slime before... Well, I get how you cleaned now.”

“The real matter starts here. Filth is of course unclean and becomes a breeding ground for disease. If the scavenger slime eats that, their disease resistance skill would naturally increase. Up until today, my scavenger slimes had level 5 disease resistance. But after today’s job, it went up by two whole levels at once.”

Shocked gasps rose at my statement, a nervous tension running through the room.

“What?!”

“Is that true?!”

“It’s true. There is a disease in that pit toilet capable of raising disease resistance from level 5 to level 7. Thankfully I noticed before leaving the pit, so I had my cleaner slimes with the same cleansing skill as the scavenger slimes to take care of the dirt on all of my belongings and confirmed they were clean with the neutral magic Appraisal. I also used Appraisal on the entrance to check the slimes cleaned properly. I did what I could in that situation before coming here. The cleaning is done, but just in case I locked the pit entrance and put a barrier over it to seal it.”

“I see. Good job. But if disease is running rampant within there...”

“Guildmaster... Luckily, it seems my slimes can clean properly. That is why I would like to continue doing the job, but could you make it forbidden to approach the cesspit until it’s completely done, and set some guards to make sure no one goes inside?”

“Of course I can do that. But do you really want to continue cleaning, knowing there’s an outbreak of disease inside?”

“Why don’t you just leave the work to the slimes instead? You can give them orders from afar, right?”

“Cleaning up disease is far too dangerous!”

“We can take responsibility and send personnel to deal with it...”

Everyone tried to stop me, but I couldn’t let them. There was something I could do about this. As long as I knew that, it would pain me to leave it to someone else.

“Unfortunately, just slimes aren’t enough to clean it completely. The filth has built up so that it’s stuck to the walls and ceilings. And if I don’t wash it off with water magic, the slimes can’t eat it. If it’s not cleaned completely, the disease will spread. I am grateful for your

concern, but please let me do this. If you blindly add more people to the task, you risk spreading the disease outside. If it were just me and my slimes, I can take care of that risk. Anyway, I will be fine... It's true that it could be done by anyone, but I'm probably the safest and fastest choice."

After I said that, I pulled out my status board to show 4 of my skills to persuade them.

Health 7

Life Enhancement 3

Super Recovery 3

Stamina Enhancement 6

Everyone who saw that — especially the guildmaster — reacted with surprise.

"What...?!"

"Health 7, this is a skill that counters diseases and poisons detrimental to health. At this level, I should certainly be at less risk than other people of contracting a disease. Even if I were to get sick, my life enhancement level 3 and super recovery level 3 will make me sturdier and recover faster. The stamina enhancement will help there. Going two to three days without sleep is absolutely fine for me, which will make my work that much faster. I doubt it will be easy to find someone more suitable than me, so how about it?"

The people in the room fell silent at my words. It seemed like they couldn't object. But even if they accepted it logically, they didn't seem to accept it emotionally, as they all had sour expressions on their faces. The silence continued for a moment, until Reinbach opened his mouth.

"Well... it certainly is difficult to deny that there wouldn't be anyone more suited after being shown this. It looks like we will be forcing all the dangers onto you, but we entrust this task to you."

Reinbach stood up from his seat and bowed his head deeply.

"Leave it to me."

"...I thought a child would be more susceptible to disease, but you certainly would be the safest option with these skills. All right. Ryoma, you can leave the guards to me. I'll have a word with some tight-lipped people with high disease resistance. If we're doing this, it'd be better to not to cause a commotion."

"Yes. Thankfully, the communal toilet facilities were built properly so nothing spread. I'm glad we caught on to this early."

"Agreed. It would've been too late if the epidemic spread through the town."

"Yes. Since the cleaner slimes that were in the same pit toilet didn't increase in disease resistance level like the scavenger slimes, the disease that's spread through the pit isn't an airborne one. As long as

the filth is disposed of, it should be safe.”

“What do you mean by airborne?”

Did the word airborne not exist here? This world did have magic and other medicines impossible on Earth, after all. Based on our conversation up until now, they seemed to treat diseases superstitiously here. I’d heard that Japan treated measles similarly in the past, so it’s possible that their knowledge of pathogens was just less developed than Earth.

“You know how epidemics spread really quickly? That spread of disease is called infection. The process can happen by spreading from person to person, or by food and water like a poison, or one of many other ways. Among these ways, the poison of epidemics spreads through the air, infecting people who breathe it in. In this case, it makes it very easy for epidemics to spread and very difficult to treat. But this time, my cleaner slimes that didn’t come in contact with the large volumes of filth did not rise in disease resistance level. That’s why I believe this is a case of either infection by direct contact with something unclean, or something to do with ingesting food or drink that had poison in it. In this case, as long as the source of infection — the filth — is cleaned, it shouldn’t be a problem. Thanks to the communal toilets being a pit, the filth falls down right away without contact from anyone else, so as long as I’m careful not to bring the epidemic out with me, it should be possible to deal with. I am no expert though, so this is all incomplete knowledge.”

“Nothing about that sounds incomplete to me. I’ve never even heard of such a thing before.”

“Ryoma, I... No, everyone here thinks the same. Where did you gain such knowledge?”

So their understanding of disease was still undeveloped...

“I learned from my grandmother. She researched medicines, so she was knowledgeable about diseases. Though I suppose saying I ‘learned’ it isn’t very accurate; my knowledge comes from our casual chats while I helped her prepare medicines.”

Everyone seemed to accept my words for now. Or perhaps they never intended to question me more, as the topic changed to future plans.

After we went through several options, it was decided the next step would take place tomorrow, so for today I would return to the inn with the ducal house to rest. In addition to this, there was still the fact that I was potentially infected at the moment. That’s why I suggested I change inns to prevent any possible spread to everyone at the inn, but all 7 of them — including the 2 maids — objected firmly. They understood what I was saying and my reason for it. But what was I going to do if symptoms broke out? I should stay somewhere

within their reach, so that they could respond. That was the least they could do for me, they said.

...In the end, I folded under the angry tears of Elise and her daughter, while being very grateful for their sentiments.

Chapter 1 Episode 18: Face-to-Face Meeting

The next day. Eight men and women were gathered at the Adventurers' Guild first thing in the morning.

"Yo, Welanna. You guys here too?"

"Well, if it isn't Jeff. You were invited too? What do you think today's about?"

"Dunno, and neither do the others. There's nothing we have in common, not rank, nor age, nor race. We were trying to figure out the criteria for our selection. Do you have any ideas? You lot are the only ones invited as a party."

"We don't know either. The most we have in common is being female beastkin. But that's unrelated, no?"

"Yeah. I'm a man, and a human to boot. The others are two humans, a dwarf, and a dragonewt. Gender and species are definitely unrelated."

Just then, one more female beastkin entered the room.

"Good morning! Nya? Welannya, Mizelia, and Cilia were called here too?"

"You were summoned too, Miya?"

"That's right, nya. I got back yesterday evening and the receptionist told me to come here today. I didn't expect the three of you to be here too, nya."

"Neither did we... Hm? Hey, aren't you smelling a lot better now? Did you finally move away from that trash mansion?"

"You refused to listen when we told you to move away from that place..."

"Did you finally reach your limit?"

"No, nya. I'm still living in that house now. I know it was like that, but I still paid a pretty penny for it. It'd be a waste not to live there, nya."

"Then why has the smell weakened so much?"

"Actually, the day before yesterday, someone accepted the cleaning request I put through the guild, nya. They cleaned it up neatly for me."

"They cleaned that hellish room with the infinite stench of death? Wow."

"I was surprised too, nya. But they really cleaned everything in

under two hours, even fixing the hole in the wall for me. Apparently it was cleaned with magic? The room was sparkling after, nya.”

“That’s amazing in itself. Who was it?”

“A new kid, it seemed. He was probably under 13 years old, and had a big basket weaved from wood and vine, nya.”

The man called Jeff reacted to those characteristics.

“Oh? Under 13 with a big basket? Was that guy called Ryoma by any chance?”

“That’s right, nya! That was what he called himself.”

“What, you know of him, Jeff?”

“Only in passing. I saw him being called out by the old man the other day and he looked pretty lost, so I told him the old man was just being a meddling busybody. He sure talked politely for a brat, though.”

“He really was a polite kid, nya.”

Just then, one more person entered the room. When Miya saw him, she yelled.

“Excuse me, I’m...”

“Ah! It’s the kid, nya!”

“Miya? You and Jeff are here too, I see.”

“Hey, sup. So you were called too. We were just talking about you.”

“About me?”

That was when the woman called Welanna stepped before Ryoma.

“So you’re Ryoma, is it? Nice to meet you. I’m the dog beastkin, Welanna. I’ve known Miya for a long time now, and we’re former party members.

“You were the one who cleaned Miya’s house, I hear. I’m surprised. How did you clean such a house?”

“Buying the house was one thing, but when the wall collapsed... Well, you saw that sorry state, right? The smell was too much for us scent-sensitive beastkin, and Miya just wouldn’t listen to us when we told her to move... Ah, I’m a tiger beastkin, Mizelia. It’s nice to meet you.”

“I’m Cilia, a rabbit beastkin. Pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

“I’m Ryoma Takebayashi. It’s lovely to meet you all too.”

“These three are the people I used to work with in the same party. When the smell of the house seeped all over myself, I knew it was too tough for them — especially for a dog beastkin like Welannya — but I couldn’t give up the house, so I dropped out of the party. I had caused a lot of trouble for them elsewhere too, nya.”

“Miya can be a little stubborn at times.”

“No matter what anyone said, she insisted on living there because she had bought it.”

“Honestly, it’s impressive that she lived there for 5 whole years.”

“Five years there? That... must have been quite the ordeal.”

Ryoma couldn’t find the right words to say.

That was when Jeff addressed Ryoma.

“By the way, you had that basket the day before yesterday too, didn’t you? What’s inside it?”

“My familiars are in this basket. I’m a tamer.”

“Huh, so you’re a tamer? What do you have?”

“Several varieties of slimes. I’m still a trainee. Slimes are slow to move around, so it’s faster to put them in a basket and carry them myself. It wouldn’t be good to upset the townspeople either.”

“I see, makes sense.”

That was when the guildmaster came in.

“Good, looks like everyone’s here. Take a seat anywhere.”

Everyone moved to a seat at those words.

“Now, I’m going to explain the reason why I called you all here. But first, I need you all to take a vow of secrecy on the information you’re about to hear. Those who cannot swear secrecy may leave the room. Just so you know, you don’t have to accept the job after you hear the details I’m about to give. As long as you don’t leak the information to outsiders, you may refuse the job after listening. There’ll be no penalty either.”

Hearing that made everyone nod without hesitation.

“All right. Then let’s start with why you guys were selected. Firstly, you’re all trustworthy and tight-lipped. And secondly, you all have disease resistance skills. You do all have that, right?”

“Indeed, I do. You should know best, old man — I’m formerly from the slums. Anyone living there would have level 1 or 2 disease resistance. Though I’m at 5.”

“We’ve all contracted an epidemic in the past too, while out on a job out of town.”

“Thankfully it was just a lighter epidemic and we all returned alive, but we obtained the skill too.”

“I believe we were all at level 3, right?”

“Mine rose to level 4. I don’t want to admit it, but it’s probably because I lived in that trash heap, nya.”

After that, the rather experienced looking dwarf adventurer made a guess at the job details, which another young adventurer reacted to in a panic.

“If the job needs disease resistance... is it an epidemic?”

“Did one break out?!”

“Calm your horses, Sher. While Gordon is right about the topic being an epidemic, it hasn’t spread yet.”

“Yet, meaning it’s appeared in one or two people?”

“No, the infected location was just discovered by coincidence. The one who discovered it is Ryoma over there, and there haven’t been any patients yet.”

Those words attracted everyone’s attention onto Ryoma at once, but Worgan the guildmaster continued with an explanation of the situation, describing the nature of scavenger slimes and how they judged it was an epidemic.

“...And that’s the story. The fact the scavenger slimes’ disease resistance rose from level 5 to 7 meant that level 6 wasn’t enough to completely resist it, so it’s assumed that the epidemic has taken run rampant in a section — or perhaps all — of the cesspits. The job this time is to stop the epidemic before it spreads to town. Furthermore, it’s expected that there will be great chaos if the town finds out about this. Thus, actions must be taken with the utmost secrecy.”

“So our job is to deal with the epidemic... in other words, clean the pit toilets?”

“No, the nine of you won’t be doing that work. Ryoma will be the only one entering the cesspits to clean them.”

“Hold it! You’re gonna make that single kid do all the work? Isn’t that a bit too much, no matter how you think of it? Children are at greater risk of getting sick, it’s far too dangerous.”

“It’s impossible to ask a single person to clean all the pit toilets of the town. A single cesspit is a job for ten men, you know?”

“I considered that myself, but this is for the best. First, Ryoma already used his slimes to clean one of the pits yesterday, finishing it in a day. Next, even among the nine of you, the highest disease resistance level is Jeff, with level 5. If the epidemic can’t be resisted by a level 6 disease resistance, you’re still at high risk. But in that regard, Ryoma’s health level is 7. He has the lowest risk of contracting the disease among you all, and on top of that, his life enhancement is level 3, super recovery level 3, and stamina enhancement level 6. Even if he contracts the disease, he has the highest chance of recovery amongst everyone here.”

Those words made the nine of them look at Ryoma in shock, before Cilia tore her gaze away to ask Worgan a question.

“...I accept that he is the most suitable one here. But in that case, what are we meant to be doing?”

“While Ryoma is dealing with the cleaning, you are to take shifts guarding the entrance and make sure no one enters. The door is built to remain unlocked while someone is inside. To make absolutely sure every gap was covered, I called you lot with disease resistance skills. Also, those with the neutral magic Appraisal will confirm that Ryoma doesn’t bring the epidemic out when he’s done cleaning.”

“Do you really need nine people for a lookout?”

“...According to Ryoma, he believes the job can be done in two to three days, working non-stop. His health skill is a combination of disease, sleep, and poison resistance, apparently. This has been confirmed too.”

“I see. That’s why we’re to take shifts, then. Ryoma, was it? Will you really be okay?”

“It won’t be a problem. Working two to three all-nighters in a row was my daily life. Since I’m doing this of my own will, it’ll actually be easier.”

“Is that so...”

“Well, if you accept the job, please keep an eye out for Ryoma and make sure he doesn’t push himself too far. I’ll give you all ten minutes. In a way, this job is more dangerous than monster extermination. It won’t be enforced, and there isn’t a penalty for refusing. Give it some thought before you decide.”

Once Worgan said that, he and Ryoma left the room to give the participants a chance to decide. They all thought to themselves, until Jeff was the one to break the silence.

“Hah... What’ll you all do?”

The dwarf adventurer named Gordon was the one who answered.

“I’m participating. This is my town too. All my friends are here, so I cannot run away.”

Everyone stepped up after this.

“I shall humbly accept too. Epidemics are a threat to be prevented at all cost.”

“An epidemic in this town, huh... It sounds bad, but I’d feel worse leaving it all to that boy alone.”

“Right? Our job is only to stand guard, anyway. The most dangerous job is being done by him alone. I can’t run away from here.”

Ten minutes was almost too long for them to make their decision, and they all expressed their willingness to participate when Worgan and Ryoma returned.

Worgan went on to explain the Earth knowledge of diseases Ryoma had excused with his grandmother, and they went on to split the team into squads with haste.

Chapter 1 Episode 19: Working with Other Adventurers

Ryoma's Side

The preparations were done. I had gotten everything ready in front of the cesspit before everyone else had arrived. Or rather, my clothes stood out so much I would have attracted even more attention if I had several adventurers trailing after me. They each had their own preparations to make, and I had to check the bacteria hadn't gotten out beforehand anyway.

All that was left now was to wait for the first squad on the job. Oh, there they are now.

The footsteps stopped, and the door leading outside opened. Three people from the meeting that was held looked back at me, including the client of my previous job, Miya, and the one I had met at the guild before, Jeff.

"Thank you for your work."

"Yeah, though we haven't done anything yet."

"It's been two days since then, Ryoma. You seem to know me and Jeff already, but I'll just introduce myself again, nya? I'm the cat beastkin, Miya Catt. Please call me Miya, nya."

Miya waved her brown furred ears and tail at me, as though emphasizing how she was a cat beastkin.

"Ah, like I said before, I'm Jeff Grange. Just so you know, I had a rough upbringing. I don't like to speak stiffly, and you don't need to be polite, either. Just talk to me casually."

"Thank you, but I'm not particularly forcing myself to speak this way."

"No worries, then. Next is..."

"That would be me."

Next was a man I hadn't met before, with brown, near-black hair that had been roughly chopped short. It didn't really bother me during the earlier meeting, but his words were straight out of an ancient drama. And the weapon he wore was a *katana*... judging by its length, a *tachi*. It was my first time seeing one since coming here. They had never shown up among the bandit loot either, so just who was this person...?

"I am called Asagi. A wanderer from the village of dragonewts,

journeying to better myself. I have settled in this town as an adventurer for the present. 'Tis been said that even a chance meeting can lead to a deep bond, such as I hope is our fate."

"I'm Ryoma Takebayashi, it's nice to meet you too. So you're a dragonewt."

Dragonewts were also called the dragonfolk. Like their name implied, they were people that had the traits of dragons. I couldn't see any of said traits at all, so I had thought he was a regular human. It seemed like Asagi noticed that.

"Were you unaware of my dragonewt status?"

"Sorry, it's my first time meeting one..."

"No need for concern. Dragonewts have not predetermined characteristics like other species, such as cat beastkin. Most possess scales over part of their body, some grow small horns, though this is rare. Everything else be identical to humans. If the scales are in an inconspicuous location, it would be difficult to spot the difference. Such as myself."

As Asagi spoke, he opened his collar to show scales that were of the same color as his hair. But I was more curious about his way of speaking and the weapon he had.

"Sorry, could I ask you one thing?"

Figuring it would be rude to suddenly ask about his speech, I asked about his hometown. Apparently, the dragonewt village was a settlement on a faraway island — established by someone who I suspected was another world transferee in the past.

"Dragonewts have tougher bodies and greater pools of magic energy than humans. This has remained unchanged from the past, but the dragonewts of old arrogantly used their power as a shield to believe other species to be far inferior. However, the one who created our village was not only a human, but a master swordsman who could best a dragonewt. It is said that he single-handedly brought down the dragonewt tyranny towards humans with that sword arm of his. But he mercifully spared the dragonewt he defeated, which awed them into thus becoming his disciples. They relocated to an uninhabited island and settled down away from the frightened eyes of others, where we have inherited their samurai spirit to this day. This was the tale of our exile and subsequent formation of our village."

For the record, Asagi was the grandson of one of those dragonewt disciples, and his manner of speaking was passed down through the generations. The origin of his name also came from a samurai group that appeared in a folktale of theirs — the color of their kimono, apparently. And the person who transferred worlds highly respected that group, or something.

...The more I listened to it, the more I felt something odd about

this otherworlder's actions. Perhaps the stories had become distorted as they were retold throughout time, but it kind of felt like I was listening to a foreigner with a slight misunderstanding about Japanese culture.

"...Hey, your conversation's real interesting and all, but shouldn't you get to work already?"

"Oh, fair point."

"Looks like we got carried away."

Jeff's words brought us back to the present, and we got back to work.

"I'm going to open the door now, but first take this handkerchief and soak it before wrapping it around your face."

I gave the cleaner slimes an order to fill the container I prepared with their deodorant solution.

"What is that?"

"This is the deodorant solution of the cleaner slimes. It reduces bad smells dramatically. Poisons and other toxins won't enter your body this way."

"I see."

The three of them watched me soak my own handkerchief and wrap it around my face before copying me.

"I'm going to open it now."

Then, I opened the door...

"I'll be back la-"

"Urgh! Geh..."

I was halfway through my farewells before heading off to work when Asagi suddenly started retching.

"Are you okay?"

"Forgive me. I was prepared for a stench when the door opened, but couldn't smell anything so I let my guard down. Dragonewts have noses as sensitive as beastkin. The moment the handkerchief slipped, I ended up like this."

Oh, so that was why. I was the same at first.

"Well, that's just how it is. I'm a human and the same thing happened to me yesterday. It smelled so bad, it reached my eyes. I wouldn't have been able to bear it if it weren't for my slimes. I'll leave the deodorant solution here, so please use it freely. Now, I'll be off for real this time."

When I entered the cesspit with the slimes, I found it to be in the same terrible state as yesterday. I appraised it to see if I could identify the bacteria before I began cleaning, and this came up:

Idake virus: *A pathogenic bacteria that occurs on rare occasions where filth has accumulated in large volumes and remained in a humid*

environment for long periods of time. Chance of outbreak increases the longer it is left untouched. Originally a harmless inhabitant of the human body, it turns pathogenic with mutation. Outbreak can be prevented with appropriate disposal of filth, such as burial or incineration.

Latency period: Onset begins within 10 hours of infection.

Symptoms: Develops in the order of dizziness, fever, chills, numbness in limbs, full-body paralysis, mental deterioration, cardiac arrest. Life-threatening.

After-effects: Paralysis in limbs may remain.

Transmission: Oral infection.

Remarks: Weak to heat and aridity. Remedy available.

There really was a terrible bacteria present! I cleaned it all before I noticed last time, so I didn't get to appraise it. I should have done it yesterday! Then I could have offered more concrete information. And wait, there was a remedy?! The moment I found out the disease name, the corresponding medicine and recipe just surfaced in my head like I was recalling something I knew. It seemed like it was in the knowledge I received. I should inform those above about this.

"Everyone, can you hear me?"

"What's wrong, nya?"

I cleaned myself and the surrounding area before the door and opened it a little, which Miya noticed immediately.

"I used Appraisal before I began cleaning. As a result, I discovered the toxicant is a source of an epidemic called the Idake virus. Furthermore, the Idake virus has a remedy. I returned to pass on this information."

"Is that for real, nya?!"

"Yes, there's no mistaking it. The remedy will require several expensive ingredients, and it may be too late for us to prepare it now, but could you send a message to the guildmaster anyway?"

"I'll go. If I tell the old man the disease name and remedy, he'd probably prepare enough for us, even if it's expensive. I don't know how long it'll take to prepare, so make it quick."

"Wait a minute. Tell him how to make the remedy at the same, that way all you need is the ingredients and an apothecary."

"You even know how to make the remedy?!"

"It was one of the things I learned from my grandmother."

"That is most reassuring to hear. If you could impart that knowledge, I shall write it down."

Asagi promptly took out writing materials he had prepared in advance, and I informed him of the medicine's formulation. He didn't seem to understand all the technical terms, but he wrote everything down smoothly when I told him how to spell the words. I hadn't

written anything with a brush for a long time. I've only been using quills or pens made from wood since coming here. But I never used brushes in past life either, apart from writing New Year's greetings.

"Done. Will this do?"

I read over the contents once to make sure there were no problems, then Jeff immediately went running off with the note. Then I headed into the toilet pit.

I didn't need any more information from the filth. It was time to dispose of it. I'm counting on you, slimes!

At my order, the slime by my feet expanded its body like a balloon until it filled the entire space in the staircase of the cesspit. After yesterday's splitting, the total number of scavenger slimes surpassed a thousand. Their combined form was titled King Scavenger Slime instead of Huge, the size of its body being significantly larger than yesterday. It seemed like a thousand slimes formed a king slime, but it seemed capable of combining further, so it was possible it could change again.

I didn't know how far it could go, but... the skills were as follows:

King Scavenger Slime x1

Skills: *Disease Resistance 7, Poison Resistance 7, Foul Feeder 8, Cleanse 8, Deodorize 8, Deodorant Solution 5, Stench Release 7, Nutrient Reduction 6, Physical Attack Resistance 3, Maximize 4, Minimize 6, Jump 3, Gluttony 1*

Consume and Absorb had disappeared in exchange for a new skill called Gluttony. When I tried using it, the king scavenger slime maximized its size to reach the ceiling of the pit and started clearing through the filth at a speed several times faster than before. With its bigger body, it was able to reach the walls and ceiling that the regular scavenger couldn't, so it might be a good idea to let it split again to have two kings on each end of the corridors with regular slimes filling the middle.

However... was it because the skill was still level 1? While the speed of a single slime was exponentially faster, the 730 slimes from yesterday seemed to work faster. It might be better to work with numbers for now. Having reached that conclusion, I ordered the slimes to break apart and clean that way, working on the ceiling and walls myself.

The doubling of the scavenger slime numbers really had a big impact. I worked nonstop until the first cesspit was cleaned, but today's work took two hours less than yesterday. After finishing my work, I cleaned up my clothes and belongings and stepped outside. Then...

"Yo, is something else up?"

"I've finished cleaning here. Please confirm it's clean before I

move on to the next.”

“Already, nya?! ”

“Was it not meant to be one pit a day?”

Huh? Ah! I see, yesterday I cleaned one pit in a day. Based on that information, the three of them assumed I could only clean one a day.

“It seems like there was a slight misunderstanding. The truth is, after I finished cleaning yesterday, the scavenger slimes were triggered into splitting. I was forming contracts with the split slimes in the cesspit, which took some time. The actual time it took to clean one cesspit was around 5 hours, but the numbers doubled through splitting too, so it goes by much faster now.”

“But even if the numbers doubled, it just went from 1 to 2, right? How much faster could they possibly, well... eat?”

“This slime is normally shrunk with a minimize skill, but it’s actually an advanced type of scavenger slime called a king scavenger slime. Do you know of big slimes?”

“Yeah, I do. The big-ass slimes, right?”

“The advanced species above big slimes are formed by combining groups of the same species of slime. That’s why what looks like one slime is actually a lump of many.”

I made the scavenger slime split into 20 slimes before the three of them.

“Wha-nya?! ”

“Whoa... Are you serious...?”

“This is...”

“I learned the other day that barely any research has been done on slimes, so the only ones who know this are myself and my acquaintances. Since I have always researched slimes, I believed it was common knowledge when I talked to everyone. I’m sorry.”

“No, if the work can go smoother then it’s for the better. But how many of these scavenger slimes are gathered in this one slime?”

“1464 slimes.”

“A thousand and...?! No, excuse me... If there are that many, then this speed is most reasonable.”

“Please keep the slimes a secret as part of the confidentiality of this mission.”

After that conversation, they confirmed the pit had been cleaned and I moved onto the next cesspit... rinse and repeat.

Chapter 1 Episode 20: Things Realized in Hindsight

Three days later...

This was the last one. I had been working pretty much non-stop for three days. While some of the time had been spent chatting, pretty much every other moment went into work. When the overnight shifts finally came to a close, I naturally started to recall the events that had occurred up until now...

“This one is done too. Let’s move on to the next.”

“Wait up. How many straight hours have you been working for?”

“The sun has already set, nya.”

“You have cleaned two of the pits with this. How about a little break?”

“My physical and magical energy are still good enough to keep going. And this needs to be done as quickly as possible.”

“...You better not be pushing yourself.”

“It does not appear so to me either, but...”

“I agree, nya. Which means there isn’t a reason to stop you, and we certainly do need to hurry...”

When I finished cleaning the second pit on the first day, Jeff and the other two adventurers agreed that I could move on to the next cesspit. The next time I came out, the guards had changed their shifts.

“Oh, he’s out.”

“You’re Miya’s friends...”

“It’s Welanna.”

“Mizelia.”

“I’m Cilia. We’re in charge of the shift from night to morning. Pleased to be working with you, Ryoma.”

“Same here. Well to cut straight to the chase, this one is done. Please confirm it. Also, I heard that you would be bringing magic replenishing potions as supplies...”

“I have them here.”

The medicine of this world could be generalized into two categories: medicines that used the natural effects of herbs and treatments just like on Earth, and magic medicines that used ingredients with magic energy or magically activated properties. Potions were one type of magic medicine with immediate effects. The rabbit-eared Cilia went about appraising while the tiger-eared Mizelia

took out a test tube shaped glass container. It was filled with a watery, deep green liquid. Each tube that Mizelia had was able to recover approximately 2,000 magic energy. Considering my total magic energy and how overconsumption could lead to the detrimental state of a 'magic hangover,' I confirmed my own status and drank 10 potions.

"Thank you, I can move onto the next one with this."

"Already? You should rest a little."

"You didn't take a single break while Miya and the others were on guard either, right? How about some food? Here."

With those words, Welanna handed me a picnic basket with sandwiches.

"The butler of the client entrusted us with these. How about you eat before moving on to the next?"

"Butler? Was that Sebas, by any chance?"

"That's how he introduced himself. You know him, right? He said you might forget to eat if you get too into your work, then he left because he had other work, but he was waiting up until just a little while ago."

I was fine for physical energy, but I had forgotten to eat so I accepted gratefully. With that, the amount of time I spent interacting with the girls increased too.

"Did the information I sent about the disease arrive?"

"The guildmaster said he'd be able to secure enough for us by tomorrow through one of his acquaintances. But you were seriously intending on working through the night, huh?"

"I fully intend on taking breaks too, of course."

"Not enough of them, though. You can rest after each cesspit, at least."

"She's right. To be honest, I had my doubts about whether you were pushing yourself too hard."

"I have confidence in my stamina. But Cilia's doubts are most reasonable, considering my age."

"It's common to hear about new adventurers taking on jobs beyond their skill level to show off, then failing."

"I feel the same. If Ryoma hadn't displayed those skills on a status board, I would have definitely objected. Entrusting a job with the whole town's safety on the line based on the statement of a newly registered and inexperienced adventurer? Absolutely not. ...But now I think you're the best option."

"No, I'm sure that would be the most rational response. Don't worry about it."

Mizelia had looked a little awkward as she admitted her words, but I never expected to be trusted by people I only just met to begin

with. Without the convenient tool of the status board, I really did look just like a regular child. Since I was actually a child, right now.

We finished eating like that, and I returned to cleaning.

The next time I took a break was when the sun was rising and the guards for the next shift arrived.

“Good work today. We’ve come to relieve you.”

“Thanks for coming, Sher, Leipin, Gordon.”

“Thank you, Cilia.”

“How’s the work coming along?”

“It’s going faster than we expected, how’s Ryoma holding up?”

“He’s working hard. There doesn’t seem to be an issue with his stamina. But the work’s on hold for the moment.”

“Is there a problem?”

“It would be faster just to show you...”

“Why-whoa!”

“What in the world... There are so many slimes, I can’t even see the floor.”

“I heard he used slimes, but did he cause a stampede?”

“Stampede? Ryoma called it splitting, though.”

“Splitting? With this many?”

I was making the slimes split again to increase efficiency when the next shift arrived.

“Are you the people on the next guard? Nice to meet you, I’m Ryoma Takebayashi. Sorry about the mess. The slimes began splitting themselves. Work efficiency will increase after this, so please be careful not to step on them.”

“Right... I’m Gordon. It’s nice to meet you.”

“I’m Sher.”

A short but bulky body and limbs. Half his face was hidden behind a thick beard. That was the impression I got from the dwarf, Gordon. The human who introduced himself as Sher looked at the slimes with interest. He looked to be around middle school or high school age. The last person was... a middle-aged man with glasses and a staff. He was staring intently at the slimes.

“Hmm... they don’t appear to be weakened, so I guess it isn’t a stampede... Oh? Why, pardon me. My name is Leipin. An adventurer researching monsters. If you don’t mind me asking, this isn’t a stampede, right?”

“I’m Ryoma Takebayashi. I also research slimes as a hobby. Sorry to answer with a question, but what is a stampede?”

“It refers to the sudden division of slimes. It occurs when slimes are in a position to divide, but their tamer continuously blocks them from doing so until they reach their limit and divide against orders. This is said to be an instinctive reaction to having their reproduction

means stopped. Once a stampede begins, they explode dramatically in numbers, but the original body and divided body are both weakened and begin eating everything around them to regain nutrients.”

“I didn’t know slimes did such a thing.”

“Wild slimes divide freely, so it doesn’t happen naturally. But there was a case of research materials being destroyed this way, and the laboratory was shunned for it. I have never witnessed it with my own eyes.”

“You just assumed so based on this large number?”

“Indeed.”

He was interested to hear that there were over 1,000 slimes to begin with and that they combined into big slimes and more, so I talked to him about slime and monster research while making contracts with the new slimes, magic energy potion in one hand. As a result, by the time I finished all the contracts, Sher and Gordon were completely lost.

...And so I continued with the endless cleaning task, interrupted once a day by Sebas bringing food. He even waited in front of the door on some days. The picnic basket had a letter from Eliaria, telling me not to worry about the slimes I left at the inn, as she was taking care of them well. Supported not only by the 9 guards, but everyone else as well, I continued to clean.

The scavenger slimes split once more, now totaling 3033 slimes. I had 1011 of them each form a king scavenger slime and line up in a row, reducing the workload significantly. Their skill levels had also gone up.

King Scavenger Slime x3

Skills: *Disease Resistance 7, Poison Resistance 7, Foul Feeder 8, Cleanse 8, Deodorize 8, Deodorant Solution 6, Stench Release 8, Nutrient Reduction 7, Physical Attack Resistance 4, Maximize 5, Minimize 6, Jump 3, Gluttony 4*

Disease resistance did not increase further. I guess that meant 7 was enough to deal with the Idake virus. Instead... or rather, for some reason, gluttony and physical attack resistance went up. Was it because they were constantly bumping into the walls? Or was it when they bumped into the slimes beside them? I didn’t know why, but having higher levels wasn’t a problem.

I followed behind the slimes while disinfecting the walls with Mist Wash and Squall until the end was right around the corner.

We arrived at the final cesspit. After the slimes finished disposing of everything, I sprayed water everywhere and heated it, then used Appraisal to confirm that the virus was gone... All good. With this, the repetitive work up until today was over.

I took the slimes and headed outside, occasionally making random

appraisal checks. Waiting for me was the morning shift: Gordon, Sher, and Leipin.

“Is it over, then?”

“Yes, everything’s done.”

“Good work! It’s all over now. You did well seeing it through to the end.”

“You really pulled it off without any rest.”

“The only times you really rested were for food.”

“That might be true. Ah, please do a final check, Leipin.”

“On it. ...All right, no problems here. Your clothes, belongings, and the surroundings are all clear. Time to return to the guild for a report.”

“Thank you. Then, let us go.”

“Hold it. I’ll take us there. Warp.”

He sent us right outside of the guild with the mid-range teleportation space spell, Warp. For someone who seemed quiet and proud, he was a considerate person.

We entered the guild and the receptionist immediately let us through to the guildmaster’s office.

“Ryoma? Are you done?”

“Yes, 30 cesspits in the communal toilets. Every single one has been dealt with accordingly. Everything should be fine now.”

“I see! That’s great... Okay! Everyone go home and rest for today! I’ll contact the others and inform them that it’s done. Come to the guild tomorrow afternoon for your reward. Since you pretty much did everything this time, you can look forward to it.”

“I understand. Then, if you would excuse me... Oh, that’s right. Guildmaster.”

“What is it?”

“Were there any reports of infection? I barely received any information on the town while I was inside.”

“It’s all good. I asked for an old granny who specializes in medicines and stuff for her help, but there have been no reports of the Idake virus yet. ...That Idake virus shows up within 10 hours of entering a body, right?”

“Yes, that was what the appraisal of the filth said.”

“Then it should be fine. The preparations of the medicine you told us about have been underway, and we’ve prepared a number of doses already. If anyone infected shows up, it should be treatable. That’s why you should hurry home and rest. You haven’t slept at all, right? If an infection arises, I’ll inform you; you’ll be no use if you’re staggering on your feet.”

“...You’re right. I shall go now.”

After saying that, I left the Adventurers’ Guild behind me. Once I

bid farewell to the other three, there was no one left to talk to. I headed towards the inn as a chilly breeze blew around me, making me feel that somewhat nostalgic sense of loneliness after an all-nighter.

The wind was refreshing after such a long shift, and when I wandered back to the inn the entire ducal house greeted me.

“You’re back! Ryoma!”

“Welcome back, Ryoma.”

“Welcome back.”

“Looks like you’ve returned safe and sound. Good, good.”

“Welcome back, Master Ryoma.”

“Let me take those for you.”

“Have you eaten yet?”

Seven people welcomed me.

This was... somehow nostalgic... Come to think of it, how long has it been? For people to welcome me home like this... Was it since mom died? No, Eliaria and the others have done this many times already, so why was this feeling happening now...?

“What’s the matter, Ryoma? Are you hurt anywhere?”

“No... my body isn’t in a bad state, it’s just... I suddenly remembered my past... with my family...”

Family? That’s right... These people gave a similar feeling.

Memories from my past life flashed before my eyes. In the oldest memory I possessed, I could already form a fist. The house back then was inherited from my grandparents, with a small but splendid training room. There, I was taught martial arts from a very young age. Father instructed me. From before I had even started school. I probably spent more time there than anywhere else in my childhood. And my father was probably the one I interacted with most.

My father made a living as a swordsmith, highly praised as a living national treasure in his youth. Despite his young age, any sword he smithed would be bought by zealous fans at a high price. That’s why I have memories of adults often visiting our home with swordsmithing requests. But Father accepted those requests very rarely. There was a limit to the number of swords that could be smithed in a year, and young smiths could barely make a living smithing as much as possible.

However, Father would only smith as many as he needed to feed his family — as well as the minimum to keep work relationships happy — and put the rest of his time into instructing me. All the adults that came over would tell me “You’re so loved,” and at the time I was young and happy to hear it.

...Alas, that changed as I grew older. With my enrollment into elementary school, I started interacting with more people and widening my world. That led to many changes, such as making friends

and studying together.

But where people gather, arguments occur. This happened one day in the early years:

I wasn't the most social of people back then, and pretty much never went to play with my friends after school or anything because I had training. I stood out among the class, so I wasn't very well-liked. I don't remember what started it, but I had been pinned against the wall by five boys. They pressured me for a while, but I showed no fear and argued back several times. But they didn't listen to me. All that came back were even harsher words from the five of them. Since they outnumbered me, they refused to listen and grew angrier the more I argued back.

Eventually, one of them raised their fist. However, having received my father's training, I evaded the punch without thinking. This was the moment that changed everything. I was backed against the wall, and the fist was aiming for my face from straight-on. In other words, the wall was waiting after I evaded. Momentum drove the boy's fist to collide into the wall, making him scream. The other boys were surprised at his pain. A worried boy took his friend's hand, making him scream louder, resulting in tears as he brushed them away. As children, they couldn't do anything and eventually went to the nurse's office, where it was discovered to be a fracture.

Our homeroom teacher was immediately informed, and everyone except the injured boy was summoned.

"How did this happen?"

Naturally, we were questioned for the reason, and I responded with what should have been the truth. Friction with my surroundings aside, I wasn't at fault for the injury. But the teacher ultimately determined that I acted violently, pushing the other boy over and stomping on his hand. Because the other four boys testified that that was what had happened. My desperate denials couldn't win against the majority. The fact I had been pinned against the wall was taken as a light joke between kids, and my parents were summoned for the severity of the injury caused.

Then, after school. The one who appeared was my father, although Mom had been the first one to respond to their call. The teacher was also surprised to see my father, who greeted her while continuously bowing his head. Immediately after that, I was punched.

Once, twice, thrice. The hard fist landed on my face. When I covered my face with my arms, my stomach was hit instead. The unreasonable attacks continued until my teacher returned to her senses and intervened, and my father kept bowing his head as soon as he stopped.

"I heard that my son has acted violently to another child. I am

very sorry for his actions.”

He suddenly switched from violence to a sincere apology. I believe the teacher was confused by my father’s sudden change of attitude. A silence flowed between us, which is when I thought, *That was wrong, I wasn’t the one who acted violently*. But the moment I tried to say that, my father’s fist came flying once again. Along with an order to stop making excuses and reflect on my actions. Everything after that proceeded quickly.

“Fortunately, the bone was only fractured slightly and will be able to heal without any long-lasting effects... As long as you teach him that violence isn’t the answer, this should be settled.”

After the exchange that felt like time had rewound, my father and I were dismissed by the teacher. The teacher who said violence isn’t the answer had accepted the violence that just happened as education. Perhaps it was because my father was an elite craftsman, but the teacher seemed to think that a stern hand was the respectful way to go about things.

But on the way home, my youthful heart couldn’t accept the result so easily. And after distancing myself a little while walking, I let out a complaint. That I wasn’t the one who injured him. My father came to a stop where he walked before me. I braced myself to be punched again, but...

“I don’t care about that. I just didn’t want to waste any more time over useless matters.”

What came flying instead wasn’t a fist, but apathetic words. Don’t care? Useless matters? Rather than relief at not being hit, I felt more confused. I could understand the words, which made me more confused than otherwise. As I stood frozen, my father took a look at me.

“Come back before your practice time. I want to work on a sword, so I’m going back first.”

Leaving only those words, I watched my father’s back as he walked away. And on that day, I doubted his love for the first time. I was at the age for my rebellious period, but as I learned more martial arts from my father, he started spending most of his time on swordsmithing instead. It was as though his apathetic attitude had risen to the surface, having fulfilled his duty. At the same time, I began to see the sides of my father he could no longer fool me with, which made me distance myself from him.

It’s hard to say whether my father noticed that. Perhaps he did, but didn’t care...

The one who connected the growing gap between me and my father was Mom. Whenever something happened, my father would stand in the firing line first, as Mom wasn’t the type of person to act

for herself publicly. Instead, she supported us from the shadows. That was the kind of person she was. There weren't any particularly memorable moments, but she was always beside me when I was in pain or trouble.

By the time I got into middle school, my father reduced the amount of direct instruction I received and immersed himself into swordsmithing. Swordsmithing wasn't meant to be a task for a single person. Other than the swordsmith that forged the blade, there was the sheath craftsman and blade polisher that usually worked in concert — but my father did that himself. He used to attend craftsman classes to study, but began doing it for real now. Practicing the forms and training alone became my daily life, and the only time I was certain to see my father's face was at breakfast.

It was Mom who strongly insisted on breakfast. She tried to connect the two of us when we barely spoke to each other. Those days continued until I approached my middle school graduation.

Father gradually pushed Mom away, until he stopped coming to breakfast... And then finished his newest blade. In front of the blade he had painstakingly polished, my father had collapsed with a triumphantly pleased expression.

The cause of his death was a heart attack. He didn't have any chronic illnesses — like with all humans, it was just his time to bow out.

After that, our lives changed. While my father had a high income, he was careless with money and spent it frivolously on his studies. As a result, he barely had any savings, and it was difficult for a middle schooler like me to find work. Naturally, it was decided that Mom would start working and sell the house. Housework became the norm, along with my training. As well as part-time work from the moment I entered high school to graduation. Mom would also work until late, coming home every day with a tired face. We would only see each other in the short time before bed. At night, we'd talk about the things that happened during the day... but Mom never complained about our life at all.

Looking back on it now, it wasn't an easy life, but we were fairly happy.

Then I entered university. We were struggling financially at the time, but Mom was adamantly against me working after high school. At the end of our discussions, I folded to her will. Fortunately, my options for part-time work had widened since high school, and my income increased if I took on jobs with some danger, like high-altitude work. Thus, I somehow managed to graduate and find employment... which was all good and all, until I had to leave that company less than a year later.

I don't know whether I could say it was beyond my control, but I definitely would have been causing inconvenience by remaining at the company. So I bowed my head to my superior and resigned. But resigning in less than a year was highly frowned upon in society. Every company pointed that out and asked for the resignation reason, ultimately resulting in rejections.

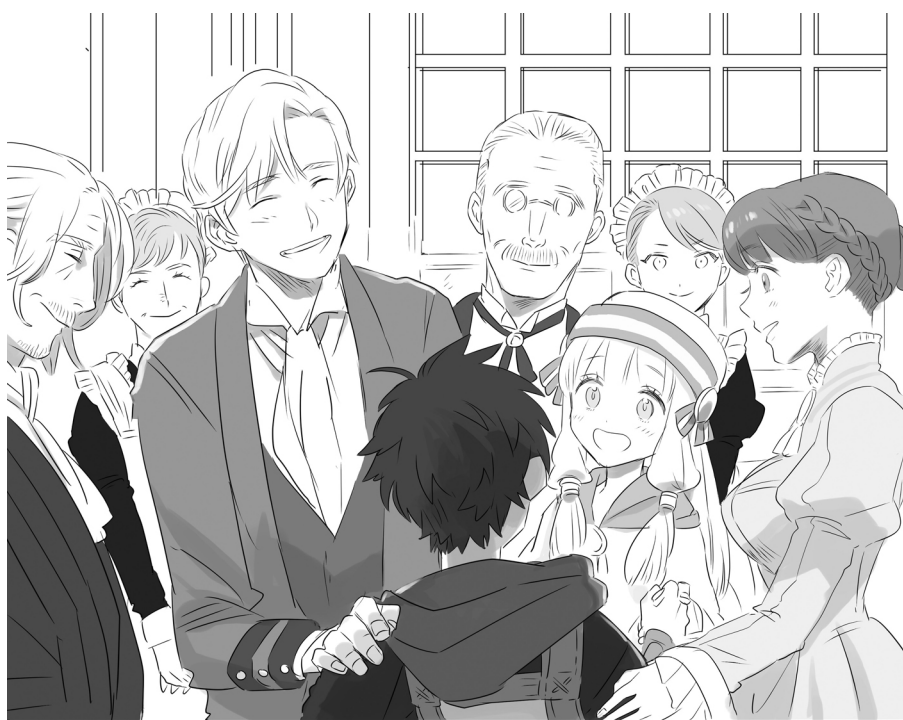
As I was lost, searching for employment, the one who had mentally and financially supported me — friendless from doing nothing but work and training — was Mom. Eventually, the company I finally got into was what could be described in modern terms as an exploitative employer. While my work hours became unstable, my life had settled for the moment. Now Mom could relax a little.

Just as I began to think that way, Mom passed away. It had been death from overwork. The funeral was held quietly, with just myself and Mom's coworkers. After it was all over, I was alone. I don't think I felt any sadness. If anything, the sense of loss was greater.

The next day, I had work. Work piled up without mercy. I submerged myself in that work. Before I knew it, that became the norm. Things lost would never return. New connections weren't to be gained, either. They were just things I could no longer obtain.

...Yet the things I had given up on were right in front of me now.
“Ryoma?! What's the matter?!”

Eliaria's voice reached me. It seemed like I had been crying. The tears had leaked out without my knowledge, dripping from my chin.



“...Sorry, I’m fine. I was just remembering my family. Everyone here gave off a similar feeling... though your faces aren’t the same.”

My mother wasn’t particularly ugly, but she wasn’t pretty, either. Vastly different from this collection of good looking men, women, and girls.

“Oh my.”

“You should come inside first. It’s about time you got some rest.”

While I was thinking such ridiculous things, Elise hugged me and Eliaria tugged my arm.

“Why don’t you have a seat?”

Reinhart directed me into a chair with his hand on my shoulder.

“You haven’t eaten dinner yet, right?”

“We’ll prepare it right away. Do you have any requests?”

Reinbach patted my head as Sebas and the two maids watched me with warm eyes.

“Here’s some herb tea. It’ll help you relax.”

“Shall I make your meal something light?”

“Let’s see... if it isn’t too much trouble, a sandwich would be nice.”

“Understood.”

They seemed to understand that I was a little embarrassed by my tears, as no one mentioned it. Instead, everyone tried to look after me in the smallest of ways. Refilling my teacup every time it emptied, allowing the night wind into the room as soon as I found it a little hot...

Elise and Eliaria were particularly enthusiastic about catering to my needs. From the corner of my eye, I could see Lilian on standby while focused on the actions of the two, having had her role taken from her. Should she interfere to fulfill her duty, or should she respect their wishes? She must have felt rather conflicted over that. She seemed a little restless.

Like this, my tired body was tended to as I answered some reserved questions, when eventually a familiar sandwich arrived in my hands.

“Thank you.”

The flavor of fresh vegetables and bacon spread through my mouth. The exact same flavor as what was delivered while I was working. I had grown so familiar to this taste, it made me feel at peace.

“That was delicious.”

In no time at all, I had cleared the plate.

“Master Ryoma, the bath is ready for you. Feel free to have a soak.”

I went to take a bath as suggested, and the next time I stepped out they all saw me to my room.

“Once again, thank you for your hard work today.”

“While we’d love to chat with you more, you should rest for today.”

“You may have pulled those all-nighters, but you still need your sleep.”

“If there’s anything you want to talk about, bring it up tomorrow. We’ll be close by.”

My head didn’t seem to be working properly, perhaps because it was my first all-nighter in years... but it wasn’t a bad feeling.

I burrowed under the blankets and raised my hand to wave. Everyone quietly left the room. I was left alone. But the warmth from the people who welcomed me home today remained right beside me.

As my consciousness faded away, a belated sense of accomplishment over having finished the job rose. Filled with a satisfaction that was difficult to put into words, I entrusted my body to the comfort of sleep.

Extra Story: The Day Before Reincarnation

“How many years have you been doing this?!”

A cup was smacked down with a yelling voice, spilling cold coffee over a certain man.

“I’m very sorry.”

“Tch... Do it again. By the end of today. Clean this up and get back to work.”

“Excuse me.”

Bowing once to the superior who had passed his eyes over the documents, the man picked up the coffee cup.

“Oh, hey, man. If you’re gonna get that cleaned up, get me a coffee too. I can’t step away from my work right now.”

“Pfft.”

“...Kuku.”

“Any sugar or milk?”

“No.”

The man passed by a subordinate who gave him a task, and silently continued walking.

Should I change into my spare clothes? No, it doesn’t matter. I don’t have any more work to do outside today.

“Kyah?!”

When he walked into the office kitchen, a woman screamed.

“Oh, what? Ugh.”

“Excuse me. Sorry if I startled you.”

“It’s nothing, really...”

“B-Boss, who’s that?”

“Takebayashi from department three.”

After greeting the two who were already there, the man called Takebayashi went about making a new coffee. As he did that, the conversation between the other two continued behind him.

“That scared the wits out of me. Why does he have to be that big? He looks like two people stuffed into one coat.”

“Like I said, that’s Takebayashi from department three.

Apparently he does some kind of martial arts, and he always uses his body in the talent show at the end of year party, which you’ll see too.”

“Is that so... Oh, is that coffee? He’s soaked...”

“Just the usual.”

“Usual? He must be clumsy.”

“...Take the hint already. Just so you know, you shouldn’t get involved with him.”

“Is he a scary person, then?”

“He himself isn’t. If anything, I’d say he’s a good person. But I said he was from department three, right? Department three is a gathering of useless employees, a dumpster to remove the hindrances from other departments. Anyway, you know how we use subcontractors? Our elite clients keep forcing their kids onto us, probably because they’d be an eyesore at their parents’ companies. Using their parents’ connections... It’s like the higher ups just want to look good. Department three is made of those types of people. Even the title of the team lead means nothing, it’s basically a demotion to the bottom rank. Anyway, no matter what he’s like, don’t stick your head into department three’s mess. Got it?”

“Right...”

The woman who received the sudden lecture by her superior watched Takebayashi’s back with hesitation in her eyes. Her superior gave a further warning, having just finished her work.

“...You have been warned. Don’t come crying to me if something horrible happens to you.”

“I-I understand!”

When the superior left with those cold words, the other woman followed her in a panic. With the two of them gone from the kitchen, the man sadly waited for the water to boil.

They could have spoken a little more quietly...

He returned to his department with the coffee in hand.

“Ah, team lead. We’re going out to lunch now.”

“Thanks for the treat, chief!”

“It’s a great place, look forward to it!”

“Sorry, man, but I won’t need that coffee after all.”

The subordinate who’d requested the coffee showed no remorse as he followed the chief out of the office. The man watched the employees walk out one by one, until there was only one person left.

A young man focused on his computer, continuing to input data.

“...Tabuchi, do you drink coffee? It’s black.”

“Ah... yes, please.”

Tabuchi drank the leftover coffee in one shot, then sighed.

“...Are they gone?”

“...It’s all right now. Fortunately, they weren’t in that bad of a mood today... Oh yeah, I saw what looked like a new employee in the kitchen earlier. A woman.”

“It’s rare to hear the team lead talk about girls. Was she cute?”

“Well, she screamed as soon as she saw me.”

“Oh, you mean in that way.”

“It was just like when you first met me.”

“I swear, you’re just way too jacked. Anyone would get scared seeing you for the first time. The white work shirt doesn’t help hide your muscles either.”

“It took quite a while until we grew close enough for you to stop speaking so politely. Can’t just make my muscles disappear on command, after all.”

“That would be another problem if you could.”

A faint smile appeared across their faces.

“So, you’re a descendent from a military family, right? Your name’s Ryoma, after all.”

“They’re just ancient martial arts techniques passed down through the generations. My family isn’t particularly important. The names are also randomly picked from strong historical figures. My father was Musashi, and my grandfather was Renyasai.”

“If you filled out your user profile online with those details, you’d be laughed off the internet.”

“In modern times, maybe... but I doubt you’d say the same if you stood before a famous ancient martial artist.”

“Yeah yeah, you don’t have to listen to me. But wait, with a body like that, what are you doing settling for being a software engineer? You should have just been a fighter.”

“Even if I became a fighter, only a small handful of people earn enough to make a living. I wanted stability.”

“What about a career change?”

“To a fighter?”

“Or something else. Do you really want to work here forever? Also, marriage and stuff.”

“I’m almost in my forties; not many places will be able to swallow a career change at my age. What about you, Tabuchi? You’re still in your twenties, right? If we’re talking experience, then I’ve already taught you everything I can. If you can handle the workload here, then you’d do well wherever you go.”

“Yeah, well, eventually.”

“In my opinion, the sooner you move, the better. Don’t expect this company to get any better.”

“...They failed once before, right?”

“The fact you’re here right now puts you in a similar place, no?”

A sigh could be heard in the quiet room.

“That’s how it is, so I suggest you change jobs soon. Your body is frail, so do it before it’s too late.”

“I’m not frail, boss-man. You’re just too ripped. But I’ll consider it. By the way... I bought something this morning.”

“Hmm...?! They made a novelization of *The Pact of the Dying Boy and the Demon*?!”

“You liked this one, right? You can have it for half-price.”

“Aren’t you going to read it?”

“It sounded good story-wise, but the art isn’t my thing.”

“I see. I’ll take it, then.”

The middle-aged man immediately handed the money over, and carefully stashed the light novel away in his bag. That was the kind of person Takebayashi Ryoma was.



That night.

Today must be my lucky day.

Work had finished before the last train for once, and there was a newly bought book in his bag. That was enough for him to feel happiness as he headed to the station, when the train arrived just as he stepped onto the platform.

“...?”

Slight blessings like that helped Takebayashi arrive home earlier than usual, where he called out to the suspicious figure lurking in front of his apartment.

“Good evening.”

“Hmm?! Oh, it’s you, Takebayashi.”

“Long time no see, sir.”

Takebayashi was relieved to see the suspicious figure actually had the familiar face of his landlord.

The other party was similarly relieved.

“Good grief. With a figure like that, you shouldn’t be sneaking up on people from behind without a sound. I thought I’d have a heart attack.”

It’s not like I was sneaking on purpose... Despite thinking that, it wouldn’t be funny if it had actually happened to the elderly man, so he apologized.

“What are you doing out here at this hour? And are you drunk?”

“Mm... I drank a little, but I’m not drunk. It’s just a little hard to go home like this... Ah! Ow-ow-ow...”

“Are you all right?!”

“No worries. I pulled my back a little at lunch today. Didn’t something similar happen before?”

“Huh? Come to think of it, yes. Around 2 or 3 years ago. You had fallen down the stairs while cleaning, and I passed by on my way home. Oh, right. Instead of standing around outside, would you like to come inside?”

The landlord wasn’t wearing his work clothes and had a

convenience store bag with drinks and snacks in hand. Combined with the fact he said he didn't want to go home, it was clear that something had happened, so Takebayashi invited him to his place instead.

"...I suppose I'll take you up on that."

The landlord looked a little apologetic, but he had nowhere else to go.

"Please do."

"Pardon the intrusion, then."

The two of them headed to the living room, where tea was prepared and placed between them.

"Ow-ow-ow..."

"Did something happen?"

"I was pruning the trees when I fell from the ladder.

Unfortunately, my son witnessed it... and now he won't stop yammering about the elderly. The issue was brought up at dinner, and I snapped a bit."

"So you left the house like that, huh."

"And that wasn't all, that damn kid of mine... Just because he's raking it in at that IT company that's been booming recently, he's started to stick his nose in my business, too. Something about how this form of asset management was ancient. Where does he think the money that raised him came from? It's true that there are many vacant rooms, but it's not a simple matter of evicting the tenants and turning it into a parking lot. He doesn't know anything about this work... Ow-ow-ow..."

He sounds like he's in a lot of pain.

Takebayashi watched his landlord complain and noticed his pain. He went to the refrigerator and took out a small container.

"Sir. This is an ointment for bruises, please use it."

"That kid — hmm? Is that the one you gave me before?"

What a sharp memory.

He certainly recalled giving the landlord this ointment last time he fell from the stairs.

"That's right. You remembered this too?"

"I remember the pain was completely gone the next day. My memory hasn't failed me yet. ...If you don't mind, then."

"Here."

Takebayashi offered the ointment, which the landlord took and rubbed generously onto his injury. Partway through that, the landlord opened his mouth.

"Where did you buy this medicine?"

"This isn't for sale, it's a home remedy. Bruises are a daily occurrence for anyone who practices martial arts, so this is a recipe passed down in my family for generations."

"I see. Ah, it's just that my grandchild comes home injured pretty much every day."

"You had a grandchild?"

"In elementary school. He's a mischievous boy. A handful to deal with, but that's what makes him cute. You're getting on in years too, Takebayashi. Have you considered marriage? You must have a girlfriend, no?"

"Unfortunately, I'm too preoccupied with my work and hobbies. I reached this age before I even knew it."

"Has no one ever propositioned you? ...Appearances aside, you have a good personality. And you're in the same line of work as my son, right? Surely you're enough of a social climber to know a broad or two."

"Unfortunately, I haven't had any opportunities to meet new people. And I doubt my income is as good as your son's. I'm just an underling, nothing in management. Living alone just barely gives me the leeway to save a little."

"How about an arranged marriage? My wife is good at those things."

"I'm grateful for the offer... but even if you gave me the opportunity, I'm too busy with work."

"Really? Well, it's easier being single in some aspects, too."

"How so?"

"The first thing that comes to mind right now is... wills? My son also said it, but I know I'm getting on in years. I could drop dead at any moment. Because of that, I worry about how much I can leave behind for them. I have multiple children, so I worry about how to split it. When I hear about family wars over inheritances, I worry and think about donating it all elsewhere. Well, that's just some of it."

"I certainly don't have experiences with such worries."

"But I suppose you won't get the happiness of having children that way. That's right, Takebayashi. How about you buy this building instead?"

...Huh?

Takebayashi faltered at the sudden words. While he didn't voice them out loud, his head was full of questions.

"Sorry, I don't understand what you mean..."

"I'm asking you to buy this apartment building, is what I'm saying. You don't have to worry about the money. A run-down building like this isn't worth much to begin with. I'll pass it to you as cheap as possible. You're at the age to have your own house now anyway. Secure a room for your retirement, then lease out the others. That way, you can get an income. I can introduce an agent that can help you get set up in that aspect."

“Please wait a minute, this is too sudden. From what you said before, isn’t this apartment building part of your inheritance too?”

Hearing that, the landlord huffed through his nose and took a can of beer from the bag.

“Pah! My sons have their own jobs. It’d be one thing if it was in the city, but they don’t need this run-down thing at the outskirts of town. Like I said earlier, if I left this in my will it’d just be demolished for a parking lot. They don’t have any interest in my work. I don’t care about that. My sons have their own lives. However... if my sons inherit everything and decide to make it a parking lot, all you residents may be evicted. Even if they end up paying an eviction fee, if that’s more beneficial for the future my sons may do it. They’ve got connections to good lawyers, too. While there are tenant laws to protect you, legal battles are a tremendous effort. It can’t possibly be nice to be chased out... but if you buy it from me, my sons can’t touch it. If I released the property through a legal contract and receive payment, my sons wouldn’t be able to object.”

“But still... why me? I’m sorry, but I didn’t think we had a deep enough relationship until now for this.”

“That may be true, but I know what kind of person you are.”

The landlord looked around the room as he spoke.

“Takebayashi, you’ve lived here for quite a while. I’ve watched you throughout that time, as your landlord... You’ve aged quite a bit. You were a young man in your twenties when you first moved in.”

“...You called me Ryoma back then.”

“Yes, yes. Now your face looks too rough for that. Yet you’ve remained living in this run-down apartment long enough to grow that old. At least out of the current residents, you’ve been here the longest. But that means you know this place more than anyone else, no? You help with the gardens and cleaning the building of your own free will. And from what I can see you keep your room in good condition, too. I don’t think you’d have a problem with managing the building.”

“Of course I’d look after my room, and the other maintenance was around the area I train...”

“I don’t care about the reason. No matter how modestly you word it, your actions speak for themselves. What’s done has been done. And you can do it. That’s enough for me. And I called you the longest-running resident here, but the others don’t speak badly of you either. I was talking to the boy downstairs just the other day. He said you’re always fixing his toys for him.”

“...Ah, that boy.”

It all began when Takebayashi stayed at the company several nights in a row working overtime and ended up coming home in the middle of the day for some reason. He found a boy crying on the stairs

up to his room, and after calling out to him he found out the boy dropped his toy off the stairs and broke it, so he fixed it with what was lying around his room. Ever since, Takebayashi would sometimes come home to a broken toy and letter hanging from his doorknob.

“You’ve been fixing things for him whenever he asks, right? I wouldn’t ask just anyone of this either. But if I was going to sell the building, I’d want it to go to someone who would take care of the building and the residents too. How about it?”

Takebayashi looked at the determined face of his landlord and felt even more troubled. After a moment of silence, the words he offered were...

“I’m very grateful for the offer, but I cannot answer right now. I am very fond of this place, but I’m not very knowledgeable about real estate so I don’t know what would be a reasonable price. I understand what you said about eviction, but I’d require a fair amount of cash if I were to purchase it. But most importantly, deciding on the spur of the moment isn’t good for either of us. It’s a very tempting offer, but answering immediately wouldn’t be prudent.”

“...Well, I suppose that’s right.”

“I don’t know about the future, but... this building is still one of your assets right now, and something valuable for your family to inherit. That’s why whether you sell it or leave it, I think it’d be best for you to think it over one more time. So that you won’t regret anything.”

“I didn’t think it was a bad idea.”

“‘There’s happiness you can’t experience without children...’ If you love your kids enough to say that, then please give it a little more thought.”

“...All right. It was something I blurted out on the spot. I’ll think it over.”

“Yes, that would be for the best.”

As he was feeling relief over getting through that situation, the landlord left his empty can on the table and stood up with a struggle, favoring his sore back.

“Is something the matter?”

“It’s about time I headed home. Sorry for dropping by so late.”

“I don’t mind that, but where will you go...?”

“Home. They’re probably still awake, so I’ll try talking to them for a bit. I’m suddenly feeling in the mood to do that. Now that I have a little booze in me, it’s perfect.”

“Then I’ll walk with you.”

“I can go home on my own. Do you know what they call you around here? The person who’s never around. I appreciate the concern, but you relax at home.”

Firmly rejected, Takebayashi saw him off at the door instead.

“Sorry for making you listen to me complain, and thanks for the medicine.”

“No, no, it was nothing. Ah, you forgot your things! Wait a moment.”

“Oh, it’s fine. I have my wallet, it’s just the drink and snacks, right? Please enjoy them yourself.”

“Me?”

“Consider it payment for the medicine and trouble. Now excuse me.”

“Thank you very much. Take care.”

“Please give what I said some thought. I’ll go talk to them first, but depending on how it goes I may seriously end up selling to you.”

Once his departing figure had left his view, Takebayashi quietly closed the door. He looked at the clock to see it was still an earlier time than he usually came home.

“It’d be nice to drink at home once in a while. Tomorrow’s breakfast can be whatever’s about to expire... and I’ll make a little extra dinner for breakfast, too. Something easy to reheat would be ideal...”

As he recalled the contents of his fridge to make a menu plan, his body moved about cleaning and doing the laundry. Cleaning, laundry, cooking. Takebayashi completed everything efficiently, working on one task as he planned out the next in his head. It was a skill he had developed through his long years of living alone.

Thus, he completed his housework, meal, and even bathed, leaving nothing else for the day.

“Now... I can relax and read!”

He began reading the light novel he’d bought today with the free time he had saved, and the night grew later and later.

That was good... I should tell Tabuchi to give it another shot..

That was how Takebayashi thoroughly enjoyed the most meager of happiness, a satisfied expression on his face as he fell asleep. In some ways unfortunate, and in other ways fortunate.

Unknowing of the future he was stepping towards...

Afterword

If you're reading this right now, then you might be someone who has purchased *By the Grace of the Gods Vol. 1* and read it until the end. Thank you very much for reading my work. You may have borrowed it from someone instead of buying it, but I am nevertheless grateful that you read it up to here.

This novel originally began on a website called *Shousetsuka ni Narou*. In 2014, with no writing experience nor knowledge, I used the site as a reader. Having moved overseas, I was struggling with language barriers and cultural differences; the passing of time leaving me estranged from my friends and feeling lonely. When I look back on it now, I could have just used Facebook or some other kind of social media. However, I didn't use anything like that and, for some reason, submitted works to *Shousetsuka ni Narou* instead.

I hope I get some comments. Will I be able to reply to them properly in Japanese? That was how I saw my work as a means of communication. Of course, I had an interest in novels back then, but at the time I truly just started this out of curiosity. It was just a hobby.

But as I continued writing, the desire to write something my supportive readers would enjoy grew. Four years later, on this day, my devotion to writing is vastly different to back then. My trial and error may have backfired numerous times, but the readers gave me advice and support that ultimately led to this, my first novelization.

I would never have been able to continue writing or publish a novel without everyone's support. I am truly grateful to everyone who has supported me and given me advice. I will continue to create a work that will live up to everyone's support. That is what I feel as I write towards the future.

So please continue giving me that support.

Bonus Short Stories

The Observing Gods

One day in the divine realm...

“Gain! Kufo! Look at this!”

“What’s wrong, Lulutia?”

“Has something that urgent come up...?”

“Is Ryoma finally leaving for town?”

“No! It is about Ryoma, but not that! Just look!”

“Just what are you on about...”

Gain and Kufo peered down at the world below, dubious of Lulutia’s menacing look.

“...I don’t see anything different?”

“He’s just staring at slimes as usual.”

“Look closely at the slime.”

“Hmm? Now that you mention it, I haven’t seen that color before. I guess it evolved into an advanced species.”

“Oh, so that’s why he’s observing it so closely. What did it evolve into? ...Huh? Gain, I’ve never seen this species name before.”

“What? ...You’re right. Scavenger slime... did such a species exist in this world?”

“...I just confirmed it, there’s no precedent.”

“Which makes it a new species?!”

“Wow! It’s been a long time since a new species of slime appeared.”

“In exchange for being the weakest living creature, these monsters have high adaptability to their surroundings. They existed long before mankind, so pretty much all the evolutions should have happened by now.”

“I looked it up, and it would basically take a miracle for this to happen. Look.”

Lulutia waved her hand airily, summoning a parchment before the other two gods.

“...Whoa, wouldn’t it take a tremendous effort to do this intentionally?”

“Gather the waste and remains of plant and animal material together in one location, then select slimes that favor that material. Germs mixed into the ash and soil added to reduce odor also come into play. The minimum conditions needed for an environment where

waste can easily break down and return to the ground. But even then, there's still a higher chance of evolution into a different species. I doubt Ryoma planned this intentionally either."

"If it hadn't been a scavenger, what would it have turned into?"

"Wouldn't there be a higher chance of a sludge slime or sewage slime? There are some places where advanced slimes like that live like normal."

"There's also a possibility of the virus slime. There's a lot of bacteria and pathogens too, after all. I can think of a few more as well..."

The conclusion the three gods arrived at was that the chance of a new species being born was extremely minuscule.

"It doesn't look like he's realized how rare that is himself... But he looks like he's having fun."

"Shall we tell him if he ever obtains the oracle skill?"

"Well, in his case, I'm sure he could be happy no matter the slime."

The three gods laughed together at the pleasant conversation.

However, several months later.

"Hey, Gain, Lulutia."

"Hmm... Another new species has been born, huh?"

"Not that it's a problem — if anything, it's a joyous occasion, but... Was this always such a common occurrence?"

The gods were peering at the new cleaner slime had been born under Ryoma's care.

"A slime that mainly consumes skin matter, body fluids, and waste products of living creatures... There are some monsters that rely on other living creatures to survive, the cleaner slime sounds similar to those."

"Natural slimes dissolve everything, and they die before they can do that."

"I was surprised before with the scavenger slimes, but for another new species to be discovered in such a short time..."

"Hey Gain, didn't you tweak Ryoma's luck a little when we were transferring him here? Could it be because of that?"

"I did fiddle with it a little, but only so that the misfortune the Earth god bestowed upon him wasn't brought to this side. There shouldn't be any clearly unreasonable acts of bad luck anymore, but I didn't bless him with the fortune to miraculously discover new species one after another."

"I see... Then maybe he's just lucky."

"Lucky... I wonder if that's true? Look over there."

"Huh? Ah... bandits."

“At this rate, they’ll reach his area in a day or two.”

“Didn’t he encounter bandits two months ago too?”

“It seems like his luck sways heavily from lucky to unlucky...”

“It’s curious, but bandit encounters are a plausible form of bad luck. And those bandits wouldn’t be a problem for him anyway.”

At the end of further discussion, the gods decided to continue their days of observation. Until the day Ryoma eventually visited the church...

Inside the Storage Room

Forest of Gana. In the storage room of the house that was carved from the cliff, Eliaria, two maids, and four escorts were helping Ryoma pack for their departure tomorrow.

“Master Ryoma. There is a large number of garments, what do you wish to do about them?”

“Some are in a state beyond repair, would you like to use them as spare rags?”

They’ve really been worn down beyond use... I guess they can be thrown, Ryoma thought.

“...Feed them to the slimes.”

“Understood. Then I’ll place them with the other items for disposal.”

“Please.”

“There’s so much stuff here, huh. Is this really all from bandits?”

Hughes looked at the various bags piled in the storage room and asked. The number of bags at the end of his gaze far surpassed the odd ten or twenty.

“It was over three years.”

“Are bandits really so frequent here that you could gather this much?”

“...Probably, because of the water nearby.”

“The convenient camping location must be one reason. And it’s well known around here that this forest is comparatively safe. While no one would normally venture this far without reason, if it were bandits trying to avoid attention, then...”

“They may prefer to choose this route.”

“So that’s why there’s so many items...”

“Hmm... I’m more surprised that Ryoma defeated this many bandits...”

“Was mostly... ambush. Have hidden exit in house.”

“No, but even still.”

“Camil. That doesn’t matter anymore. No matter the method,

Ryoma really defeated them and survived until now. What's more important right now is to keep your hands moving, everyone!"

"I understand. ...But there really is a lot of stuff..."

"I try not to waste... the things I hunt..."

Like he said, Ryoma didn't throw away anything from the bandits he defeated, instead abandoning them in the storage room. Even the leather bags he had no use for he would try to feed to his slimes if possible.

"Indeed, that is most important."

At those words, Jill ruffled Ryoma's head once before returning to his work with everyone else.

Furthermore, it should be noted that despite the volume of belongings implying a large number of bandits had been defeated, no one had noticed that there wasn't even a single grave...

Behind the Adventurer's Guild

The night Ryoma registered at the Adventurer's Guild, the guild employees had gathered on the first floor for their end of day meeting.

"And so, this is the last thing on the list."

Directing the meeting was the guildmaster. Worgan looked around the room full of employees and addressed them all at large.

"I'm sure some of you are already aware. This afternoon, Duke Jamil, the duke of this area, visited with his family. While he was here, a child named Ryoma Takebayashi registered with the guild. I'd like you all to keep an eye out for him."

"May I ask a question? What specifically do you want us to keep an eye out for?"

"Report everything to me, no matter how trivial. You may treat him as a normal adventurer. There's no reason to show him favoritism."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah. It's just that he grew up isolated in the forest. If he looks like he's having trouble adjusting to life in the village, help him out an indirect manner. Also, one more thing. If you see anyone in the guild giving him trouble, stop them immediately. Say whatever you need to say, just make sure you don't get in harm's way. If it can't be solved with words... stay your hand."

Worgan's words contradicted themselves, so an employee voiced their confusion.

"Does that mean we don't have to stop any physical fights...?"

"If fists start to fly then there's nothing to be done. If it comes to that, I want you to come to me immediately, even if you have to set your work aside. Don't just ask any nearby adventurers for assistance.

Anyone who rushes it will just cause more damage.”

Worgan continued sternly.

“The kid named Ryoma is fairly skilled, despite being 11 years old. He passed the exam I set up with full marks. Both the regular exam, and my personal test.”

The employees stirred faintly. It wasn’t that uncommon for the practical exam to be passed immediately after registration. Even if someone was newly registered, those who worked in professions such as hunters and soldiers already had the combat skills needed.

However, obtaining *full marks* was a different case. On top of that, the non-regulated exam that Worgan tested of his own volition was an important lesson for prospective adventurers. But the meddling of the guildmaster who wholeheartedly believed that failure was the best teacher — based on his own experience — was annoying for those on the receiving end.

“Is the boy really that strong?”

“There’s no doubting that he’s strong. It’s just... I can’t see a limit to him. He looks like a regular, ridiculously fragile kid, but the way he held himself and moved around during the exam was something else. It was different from those guys I sometimes see relying on their own talents, more like the result of training... and years of it at that... I just don’t know. He’s a mystery. His appearance, ability, and aura just don’t match up. No matter how low I round my estimates, he definitely has the combat ability of rank C or above.

“Well, at least he seems to have a gentle personality, though that makes him more difficult to understand... At any rate, just treat him as a normal adventurer for the most part. But if anyone picks a fight with him, they’ll be the ones in danger. If any of you try to intervene, you may get hurt too. That’s why you should always come get me first. If you have to rely on an adventurer, make it one rank B or higher. Got it?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Good! Managers, make sure everyone in your teams are aware of this. Those who are off today can be informed tomorrow. ...And that’s all for today! Go home or go drinking, whichever it is, you’re dismissed!”

“Thank you!”

“Good work today!”

“Thank you for your work today!”

The employees all exchanged farewells with each other as they gathered their belongings and left the guild behind them.



The next day. One employee was visiting the guildmaster’s office.

“Excuse me. I’ve brought the documents.”

“Thanks, leave them over there.”

“Understood. Also...”

“Hmm? Did something happen?”

“I just saw the Ryoma boy you mentioned earlier accepting a job.”

“Oh, already? What job was it?”

“A cleaning job somewhere, I think.”

“Huh? Cleaning?”

“Yes, that’s what he was talking about.”

“I see... I wonder why he chose cleaning of all things?”

“Maybe he wanted to pick something easy for his first job?”

“He is a calm kind of person, so that might be it. But with all his abilities and experience living in the forest, I thought he would go for monster extermination or gathering herbs...”

“Shall I bring the worker in charge here?”

“No, there’s no need for that. Could you pass on a message to send him here when he comes back to give his report? I’ll ask him myself.”

“Yes, sir.”

Thus, several hours later, Worgan met with Ryoma once again. He was yet to know that the new job he introduced would bring forth a shocking incident involving the whole town, and extra work to go with it...

Efforts Unknown

One day at the Adventurer’s Guild.

“How’s the outcome so far? Anything leaked outside yet?”

“Nothing yet.”

“What about the old lady from the Merchant’s Guild? Did you deliver the antidote information Jeff brought?”

“I sent a messenger, but they haven’t returned yet.”

In the guildmaster’s office, Worgan was talking to one of the employees with a strained face. That was understandable. They were right in the middle of a situation where one wrong move could cause the whole town to fall into chaos. And that situation had been handed to a single young adventurer who had volunteered himself to stop the chaos. Unable to visit the scene directly, they could only spend their time waiting in torment.

“Guildmaster, the Merchant’s—”

“Send them in!”

Worgan didn’t bother listening to the whole sentence before giving permission for the female employee to come inside and give her report.

“What did the old lady say? Did you confirm the antidote exists?”

“Yes! The guildmaster over there and two of the employees in charge of medicines confirmed it. There’s no mistaking that was the recipe for the Idake virus antidote! The Merchant’s Guild is immediately rounding up their medicine brewers to prepare some antidotes in case anyone is infected!”

“I see! Did they say exactly how long it would take?”

“The brewers will be ready to work today, but the recipe requires at least one day to complete. It seems like the remedy uses some complex processes, so much that the guildmaster commented on how impressive it was to know such a recipe. ...Not only that, but she was worried at how an adventurer knowledgeable about antidotes coincidentally found a rare disease before an outbreak. She questioned the possibility of it being an inside job.”

“...Well, that old lady hasn’t met Ryoma directly yet, after all. Her concerns are valid, but there’s no possibility of that happening. I just can’t see that kid as the type to do something so wicked. It isn’t worth the risk just to earn points with the guild either. He didn’t seem like the calculating type, but he should be able to figure that out. ...If she’s bothered by it, she can meet him at some point and talk to him herself. As long as it’s after all this mess is over, I won’t intervene. Sorry, but please pass that last part on back to her.”

“Are you sure?”

“It doesn’t really matter, does it? That old lady would be able to make up as many excuses as she needs to meet him, she hasn’t lived so long just for show. Once she meets him herself, she’ll realize she was just overthinking it. You told her the duke’s family backed him too, right? Even that old hag wouldn’t try anything rash with that knowledge. She’s always twisting things to her own convenience, it’d be nice to teach that senior citizen to worry a little too.”

“It sounds like your personal matters have gotten mixed in there...”

“Our guildmaster is no good at negotiating, after all.”

“...Getting back to the topic. For now, treatment is being prepared. Please make a list of adventurers in this town that have a decent level of disease resistance. Ryoma is the only one dealing with the disposal right now, but he’s controlling a large number of slimes and using his magic at the same time. Who knows how long he’ll last by himself... If Ryoma is rendered unable to continue, we’ll have to swap in other people. Keep paying attention to the gossip and information circulating through the town. As soon as this gets out, it’ll be chaos. Other than that... the public toilets in town have been sealed, right?”

“Yes, we’ve told them they’re being cleaned. The plan is to check them as soon as they’ve been cleaned, then reopen them if there are

no issues.”

“Good, please continue doing that. We have to give it our all and make sure this situation stays a secret, too.”

“Yes, sir!”

Just like the squad on the scene of the disposal, they were also working hard to maintain the town’s peace where they could.



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by Roy

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Edited by Nathan Redmond

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